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BEN BRACE.

VOL. II.

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BEN BRACE,

THE LAST OF NELSON'S AGAMEMNONS.

Frederick

BY CAPTAIN CHAMIER, R.N.

AUTHOR OF "THE LIFE OF A SAILOR," &c.

D'ye mind me, a sailor should be ev'ry inch
All as one as a piece of the ship,
And with her brave the world without off'ring to flinch,
From the moment the anchor's a-trip.

DIBDIN

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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B E N B R A C E,
THE LAST OF THE AGAMEMNONS.

CHAPTER I.

At the battle of the Nile,
Our children shall smile,
And tell ages yet unborn what deeds Nelson has perform'd.
Sea Song.

It was on the 1st of August—the glorious 1st of August!—England will remember that day, and so will France, as long as the nations exist. Hood, in the *Zealous*, who had made the signal for the land, about four in the afternoon made the signal also for the French fleet at anchor. It was round the decks in a second; we did not want any drummer to beat to quarters, or boatswain to turn the hands up. We were every man of us aloft; and we came bolting down the rigging to clear the decks, for we saw

that before dark we should be into a fight. The admiral, who ever since we entered the Gulf of Coron had never sat down to a regular meal, now ordered his steward to pipe to dinner ; and he seemed that day in higher spirits than ever I saw him. I was in the cabin the whole time, clearing away for the breeze ; and when the officers rose from table, Nelson said, “ Before this time to-morrow I shall have gained a peerage or Westminster Abbey.”

As we drew in-shore, I counted the number of the enemy myself ; and thus stood the odds before the battle—they changed a little afterwards :—The French fleet consisted of thirteen ships of the line and four frigates, carrying in all eleven hundred and ninety-six guns, and eleven thousand two hundred and thirty men. Our fleet consisted of the same number of ships of the line and one fifty-gun ship, carrying ten hundred and twelve guns, and eight thousand and sixty-eight men. Ours were all seventy-fours : the French had three eighty-gun ships, and one three-decker of one hundred and twenty guns.

The French were moored in a line of battle in Aboukir Bay ; and directly we were close enough to make out the position, we hauled our wind. It was then north-north-west, blowing a top-gallant breeze, and we took in the royals when we hauled up: the rest of the squadron did the same. We now got a bower-cable out abaft and bent it forward, in order to anchor by the stern should it be requisite. A close line of battle was formed, and we stood in to the bay, sounding as if we were going into Port Royal, the leadsman calling the soundings without the least shake in his voice. The signal was flying "for the headmost ship to bear down and engage as she reached the van of the enemy, the next ship to pass by and engage the second ship of the line," and so on.

The French admiral had sounded before us ; he knew where the reef was, and he placed a French brig there in order to tempt us to near the Island of Bakier. But old birds, you know, are not to be caught with chaff, and that plan failed. We bore up, the Goliath leading the way, she having outsailed the Zealous, much to

the anger of Hood, who disputed the honour with Foley until his ship dropped astern.

It is an awful thing going into an engagement like this. Every preparation had been made, and we stood in silence awaiting the fire of our enemies. Their line presented a noble appearance: they were anchored in compact order close in with the shore, describing an obtuse angle in its form, flanked by gun-boats, mortar-vessels, and four large frigates, these again were supported by a battery of guns and mortars on the island, near which it was requisite to pass.

The situation was well chosen; for it gave a decided advantage. They had no sails to work, no anchors to drop, no ropes to belay, no position to ensure; they had only to blaze away steadily; their ships forming fixed batteries, and the batteries protecting the ships.

The firing began. The French line opened with a steadiness which proved their nerves and their skill; but as the ships approached without yawing a point, each vessel steering for the van-ship, round which they had to pass, a little wildness of direction, a little hurry to

blaze away, was evident. The Goliath took the first shot about half-past six o'clock : batteries, gun-boats, and ships, all saluted him at once ; he passed a-head of the van-ship and anchored alongside of the second ship. Hood in the Zealous followed close, and brought up on the bow of the Guerrier. In twelve minutes the last-named ship was dismasted ; and the next opponent of the Zealous, the Conquérant, shared the same fate. The third ship was the Orion, Captain James Saumarez. In standing in, La Sérieuse, a French frigate, dared to fire upon him ; he gave her only one broadside, and she reeled and sunk directly. That was an awful moment ! the work of a second had sent hundreds to destruction ! Saumarez passed on as if no deed had been done, and quietly took his station on the larboard bow of the Franklin and the quarter of the Peuple Souverain, receiving and returning the fire of both. Then came the Audacious, Captain Gould ; she anchored on the bow of the Conquérant. The Theseus, Captain Miller, followed, giving the Guerrier a salute that astonished her ship's company, and took

his station on the larboard side of the Spartiate.

Well, it was no small mortification to be looking on so long; but it was now our turn. The Vanguard, with half-a-dozen ensigns flying, steered for the larboard side of the Spartiate, anchored within half pistol-shot, and opened a fire which soon silenced that ship, although we suffered terribly; for the raking fire of the Aquilon, the next ship in the French line, was hot and well directed: but Captain Louis, in the Minotaur, anchoring between the Aquilon and the Vanguard, relieved us, and soon settled the affair with her opponent.

There I stood, with a spy-glass under my arm, on the poop of the Vanguard, reporting the ships to the admiral as they came into action: and it was with no small pride that I saw the Bellerophon, Captain Darby, run along the line, and drop her anchor close alongside the Orient, of one hundred and twenty guns; the latter being the flag-ship of the French admiral Brueys: and boldly and gallantly was it

done. Captain Peyton, in the Defence, followed close in the Bellerophon's wake, and taking his station ahead of the Minotaur, the line remained unbroken. He had on his larboard bow the Franklin, of eighty guns, which ship carried the flag of Rear-admiral Blanquet. The Majestic, Captain Westcott, got foul of one of the ships astern of the Orient, and suffered severely from that ship's fire: she was soon cleared, and got into action with the Heureux, on the starboard bow, and the Tonnant, of eighty guns, on the starboard quarter, the eighth and ninth ships of the enemy's line. Four other ships of the English squadron had yet to come into action: they had been despatched to reconnoitre Alexandria, previously to the discovery of the French fleet; they were therefore far away at half-past six P.M. when the action began; and night having closed about seven, it required much prudence to avoid the shoals, when they saw the fierceness of the action, and, like all seamen, were anxious to make a straight course towards their enemies.

The Culloden was about two leagues astern,

but was the leading ship of the detached squadron. The night was dark ; but Troubridge, was cool and collected. The leadsman called the soundings ; and no man could have imagined that between the soundings of eleven and the time required to gather in the lead-line, especially when directions had been given to “ heave quick,” the ship would be on shore. But so it was with the Culloden : neither could all the exertions of the crews of the *Leander* or *Mutine* relieve her from her situation in time to share in the action. Just think what a man like Troubridge must have felt, when he heard the roar of the guns, the blaze of the musketry, the lights of the English fleet,—(we had each of us four,) —the noise, the tumult.

Well, the Culloden served as a beacon to the following ships : and it must have been some consolation to all the gallant fellows on board of her, that although they were hard and fast, they warned the rest of the danger, and thus the other ships got safe into action. The Cullodens could bear it ; they were all tried

men ; their captain was as brave a fellow as ever drew breath, their officers heroes.

Hallowell, in the Swiftsure, kept further away from the reef, and seeing a dismasted ship drifting out of the bay, imagined it might be an English ship: and it was the Bellerophon, who had been overpowered by the Orient, her masts and cables cut away, two hundred of her crew killed and wounded. She was going out of the action, although every heart on board of her yearned to get her into fire again. Hallowell occupied the space she had vacated ; whilst the Alexander, Captain Ball, boldly and nobly supported him. Then came the Leander: Troubridge had despatched her to Nelson's assistance. She endeavoured to anchor athwart hawse of the Orient ; but the Franklin being so close to her as to render this impossible, Captain Thompson took his station ahead of the latter ship, thus raking the two ships of the two French admirals.

Now, then, it was a fair field and no favour ; The French fought well ; but this doubling

system quite surprised their intellects. Such was the destruction, that before a quarter of an hour had expired, the two van-ships of the enemy's line were dismasted ; and although ships don't want masts when they are at anchor, yet no sailor fights as well in a floating hulk as he does when the top-gallant yards are across : a mast going creates confusion, and confusion begets fear.

The action was now in the centre of the line. The *Orient*, *Tonnant*, *Franklin*, and *Heureux* were fighting like fury to recover the day—or night, which ever you like best. The *Bellerophon*, having been blown almost to pieces, cheered up the French seamen : and those who know anything of that nation, know that no men fight better when a little success has flushed them with conquest ; but in a retreat, or when they begin to wax faint-hearted, they go off like chaps on the West India station, when yellow Jack has laid his claws upon them—they are all noise and nonsense, and then despair and die.

They fought well—there's no denying that : and that man is a fool who ever takes from the valour of his beaten enemy ; for in that proportion he takes from the merit of the victory.

It was now that the admiral received a severe wound and fell into the arms of Captain Berry. I saw him fall, and jumped off the poop like a lamplighter. I never saw such an ugly hit in my life. The Langridge-shot—a mixture of broken nails, glass, tomahawks, and boarding-pikes — came skimming along the deck, and one of them had struck the admiral on the forehead : it cut the skin at right angles, and it fell down over his face, making a horrible wound. I thought it must have gone right through his head ; and I trembled like a leaf when I took him by the legs, and gently with some assistance conveyed him below. I had never seen the doctor at work before during an action ; and he looked for all the world like a butcher with his bleeding lambs around him.

“ Make way for the admiral ! ” said I.

There was not a man in that cockpit, wounded or dying, that didn't make a stir to leave room for him they all but worshipped.

"No, doctor;" said Nelson; "I will take my turn with my brave followers."

I wish I could give an idea of the murmur of admiration which came from lips fast closing for ever,—the dying, whose thoughts had been far away. Directly Nelson came amongst them, they recollected he was their admiral; and one gallant fellow under the surgeon's hand rolled off the chest to make room for his commander. He heard me say to the surgeon, "Lord love you, sir! do look at this."

"Is that you, Brace?" said the admiral, for the skin covered his eyes.

"It is, Sir Horatio," said I.

"Always by me," he continued,—"when most wanted. Tell the clergyman to come here." It was evident he thought that he had received his orders from aloft, and that he was fitted foreign.

Well, away I went for Mr. Comyns; and

the good gentleman immediately attended the summons. He was a man much liked by us all, for he was always very kind. He came. Lord ! how I shuddered and shook, when I saw this hero stretched out, believing himself to be mortally wounded, running up the log of affection and gratitude ! “ My last remembrance,—*my last*,—mind, Mr. Comyns,—to Lady Nelson.” He recollected other matters, and told me to get a commission filled up for Captain Hardy, promoting him to be post-captain, and appointing him to the Vanguard. “ And, do you hear, tell Mr. Capel to go on board the Minotaur, and desire Captain Louis to come to me : I must thank him for his gallant support and assistance this day.—I have been, Mr. Comyns, one hundred and twenty-four times engaged ; but now, I believe, it is nearly over with me.”

Captain Louis came down ; and he hung over his bleeding friend and glorious chief in silent sorrow. “ Farewell, dear Louis, farewell ! I shall never forget the obligation I am under to you for your brave and generous conduct.

And now, whatever may become of me, my mind is at peace." I was then supporting the head which was laid as if in death upon my lap. I was wiping away from my eyes what no man could have suppressed, and hardly saw the surgeon who had approached. The quick glance of science instantly detected that the wound was not mortal ; and before the doctor could say the word, the conviction had flashed upon my mind, and I called out, " Cheer up, cheer up, shipmates ! the admiral's wound is not serious, after all."

Whilst the surgeon had been examining the wound, you might have heard a pin fall ; but when the words ' not serious ' were repeated, the wounded and the dying, the bleeding and the fainting, gave a cheer which must have come more home to the heart of Nelson than all the rewards that were ever showered upon him. I blubbered like a great girl, and Captain Louis was like a man electrified. It was no use that the doctor said, " Do, sir, keep quiet."

" Brace," said the admiral, " tell Mr. Campbell to get everything ready for writing the des-

patches." Campbell had been wounded himself and was unable, partly from his wound, and partly from his feelings for the admiral, to write. "Tell the chaplain, then," said the admiral, "to come." But before he came, I had carried the admiral to his cabin, and he had taken a pen, and begun to trace the first lines, which marked the gratitude to HIM who had thus given the victory to us.

About half-past eight, the *Aquilon* and *Peuple Souverain* had an English crew on board of them; and Captain Berry despatched a lieutenant to take possession of the *Spartiate*. The officer returned with the French captain's sword, which Captain Berry brought to the admiral. He looked at it, and then handing it to me, said, "Come, Brace, some more of the old work; you'll never be able to carry all these under your arms."

It was about nine o'clock — the victory was certain: the van of the line had Englishmen on board of them; the firing still continued along the line, but the result was unquestionable. The admiral was below, when a noise —

a loud, busy noise—announced that the Orient, the French commander-in-chief's ship, was on fire. It's an awful sound, "Ship on fire!" on board a ship, and all eyes immediately were turned in the direction. I left the admiral all alone: his head was bandaged up, the skin replaced, so that he saw well enough out of his larboard hawse-hole, and I ran on deck to get all intelligence I could.

It appears that the French admiral, little dreaming that this action was likely to have taken place where he was moored, had been painting his broadside, which the Bellerophon afterwards spoilt. The paint-pots were all about the decks,—and new paint and oil are not like the newly-discovered dresses in which a man may walk in a fire without being singed. When this blaze was first observed to have broken out in the after part of the Orient, Captain Hallowell desired all the guns that could be spared from accommodating the Franklin to be directed to the part of the Orient which was now on fire; and he called Captain Allen of the Marines, and ordered him to con-

tinue his musketry only in that direction : this was done to hinder the French from extinguishing the flames. The crew of the *Orient* slackened their fire, although they blazed away from the lower deck to the last, in order to put out the blaze on board of their own ship ; and our increased energy, all in one direction, made the slaughter more serious.

The admiral, who had fought like a Frenchman—and like a gallant one too—had already received three serious wounds ; yet he kept his station, and animated his men. A round-shot from the *Swiftsure* cut him in half, and he was spared the terrible termination of the battle. Casa Branca, his captain, fell by his side. The confusion was dreadful ; the flames spread far and near ; for the fire of the *Swiftsure* was so well directed, and the slaughter so great, that even Frenchmen quailed before the increasing and devouring element. Many jumped overboard to avoid what they saw was inevitable ; whilst the flames spread along the decks, and darted up the rigging like the quick rocket in its ascent, leaving behind it a stream of liquid fire.

In vain now did many supplicate for mercy ; the steady aim of the Swiftsure soon thinned the number who yet nobly, but fruitlessly, endeavoured to remedy the evil. The water closed over many who sought it as a refuge ; whilst the roar of the guns, the unceasing rattle of the musketry, the cracking of the wood, the rush of the blaze, overcame any shriek which the sufferers might have uttered.

At this moment, one sound, louder than the loudest thunder, deadened even the fury of the combatants. The Orient had blown up ; and such was the startling effect of this dreadful explosion, that those whose blood boiled with the heat of victory were paralysed by the sudden crash, and they left the work of death to gaze on that of destruction. The glare of light illuminated the Bay of Aboukir. The darkness of the night had before rendered the position of the four last ships which came into action doubtful ; but now the terrible blaze made night a day,—every ship, every flag was visible. An awful, a deathlike silence succeeded the fearful event ; and not a soul whispered his fears,

not a voice even shouted the name which flew on the tongues of all, until mast after mast, and spar after spar, fell with their loud splash into the water, and broke the silence. Never has man seen a sight its parallel.

I turned to see who it was that rested his arm upon my shoulder ;—it was the admiral. He had, unobserved, reached the deck ; and his voice first broke the silence on board the Vanguard. “The boats !—the boats, Berry ! Be quick—send them instantly to rescue the crew, if possible !—Brace !”

“Sir,” said I, turning my head.

“The signal-book instantly.”

I left him, and he stood amongst his own crew hardly recognised : the scene they had just witnessed had destroyed even the discipline of an English sailor ; and you know what a sound it must have been to have shaken the brains of the foremastmen, so that they stood by their admiral without noticing him.

The boats of our ship, and those of the other vessels near the Franklin, saved about seventy of the Orient’s men : many more were picked

up, who, previously to the explosion, and knowing its certainty, had lashed themselves to spars, and launched themselves overboard. The English fleet were now in some danger from the falling spars: two large pieces fell in the fore-top of the *Swiftsure*: a lighted port-fire fell into the main-royal of the *Alexander*; but Ball, who was a good officer, had provided against all contingencies, and it blazed innocently until a hand was sent aloft and removed it.

When the silence occasioned by this dreadful explosion had been broken by the fall of the masts; &c. the firing instantly recommenced along the line to leeward of the centre, and continued without intermission until three o'clock.

At daybreak every eye was on the alert to mark the progress of victory. Every ship, with the exception of two, the *Guillaume Tell* and the *Généreux*, the two rearmost ships of what was formerly the French line, had struck her colours; and these two, taking advantage of a light flaw of wind, cut their cables and put

to sea. The Zealous instantly made sail in chase ; but every other ship had been so seriously injured in their rigging, that none could follow the noble example of Captain Hood, and Nelson recalled him. Two frigates escaped also ; and, with the exception of these four ships, every vessel of the French line lowered her colours to the cross of St. George. Think what must have been the feeling of those men who looked at the glorious sight ! think how we shook each other by the hand ! think how heartily we congratulated each other ! To be sure, we did growl a bit when we learned that the Orient had on board 600,000*l.* which had gone to the fishes.

Of thirteen sail of the line, nine were taken and two burnt ; of the frigates, one was sunk and one burnt. This latter was the *Artemise*, commanded by a scoundrel, a disgrace to the French navy, one Monsieur Estandlet. He fired his broadside into the *Theseus* ; that was all fair enough, and we gave him credit for his pluck, especially after the example of *La Sérieuse*. Directly he had blazed away all

his wrath, which he did in this one broadside, he struck his colours. That was all right enough, if he and his crew liked being prisoners better than sheering off and making sail. But after he had struck, and when the *Theseus*' crew, with all the generosity of sailors, would have stretched a hand to assist any one of the crew of the frigate had they been in danger, what does this fellow do, in the face of every law of honour and of nations, but set fire to the ship, now no longer his, but ours, and getting his men into the boats, escape with the rest of his poltroon crew.—That was a disgrace to the Great Nation, as these flamingoes call themselves.

Well, this *was* a victory—Nelson said it should have been called a conquest. We lost eight hundred and ninety-five men, and no less than five thousand two hundred and twenty-five of the French were killed; the rest, three thousand one hundred and five, were sent away in a cartel. We lost one gallant fellow, Captain Westcott; but he fell in the moment of victory, in the most glo-

rious action ever fought. And as, on the 2nd of August, we worked like horses to secure our prizes and to repair our fleet, many and many's the time that we stopped in our duty, and shaking hands with our next neighbour, would say, "It was a great victory: and only think what the girls will say when we stand in to Spithead."—Lord bless them! we always used to think of them. Who would give a fig for a laurel, if the eyes of woman did not render it sacred?—who wouldn't fight as sailors ever fight, when they think of the applause of those who make life a pleasure, and who sweeten every affliction?

But avaust! I am going out of the yarn,—and that's wrong, because I have a duty to perform towards the admiral. His mind, although occupied with the numerous objects around him, was full of gratitude to Providence; and when the signal had been made for a midshipman from each ship, and they had copied the orders, the different captains read the following:—

“Vanguard, off the mouth of the Nile, 2nd August, 1798.

“Almighty God having blessed his Majesty’s arms with victory, the admiral intends returning public thanksgiving for the same at two o’clock this day ; and he recommends every ship doing the same as soon as possible.”

At the time specified, Mr. Comyns read the prayers, and each ship’s chaplain did the same. The service made a deep impression on the prisoners ; and it was remarked by one of them, “ that it was no wonder the English officers could maintain such discipline and order, when it was possible to impress the minds of the men with such sentiments after a victory so great, and at a moment of such seeming confusion.”

The Arabs had been looking on at the action, and, like all wise people, declared for the conquerors. You see in life it is just the same all over the world : it is not every man who sticks by an opposition when he can get into office by changing his words a little ; and these Arabs, directly they found we were masters,

for the three following nights the whole of the coast, as far as we could see, was illuminated by the very men who would have speared us and cooked us the day before.

The 3rd of August came, and every ship had been secured but the *Timoleon* and *Tonnant*: they were both dismasted, and could not escape. The *Timoleon* was aground; and her captain, after setting her on fire, escaped with his men on shore. The *Tonnant* refused to submit, and consequently the *Theseus* and the *Swiftsure* were sent to settle the business in another manner; and no sooner did the captain of the Frenchman perceive what was approaching him, than he did what he ought to have done before—surrendered without resistance: for what is the use of giving trouble when nothing can be gained by it? He *had* cut his cable and drifted on shore; but Captain Miller soon got her off, and she was secured in our line. Captain Berry was sent in the *Leander* on the 5th, to Lord St. Vincent; and Captain Capel was directed to land at Naples and proceed overland.

For days afterwards we were employed burying the dead: every now and then bodies could be distinguished floating in the bay; and when the morning gun was fired, up jumped one or two to inquire how the action was going on. We were obliged to be quick at the grave-digging line, for the stench was so horrible that we apprehended a pestilence.

Of course, the admiral expected votes of thanks from everybody, and presents from half the crowned heads in Europe; but he never expected one which, after all, although a queer gift, was the most suitable; and when Captain Hallowell sent him a coffin made of the mainmast of the *Orient*, adding, that when he (Nelson) had finished his military career in this world, he might be buried in one of his own trophies, he had it stuck up in his cabin; and I had to dodge round this death-box sometimes in the dark, not much to my liking or my amusement.

Although four ships escaped us at the time, sooner or later we had them all. We picked up the *Généreux* off Cape Passaro, when I was in

the Foudroyant; and the same ship — but I was on shore in Sicily with the admiral, he was a lord then—took the Guillaume Tell, of eighty-six guns and one thousand men, and she was the last remaining ship of the French fleet which was in the action of the 1st of August. To be sure, those Frenchmen picked up the Leander; and well the fight was kept up. Captain Thompson fought right well, and we had the satisfaction, when we took the Généreux, to repay them for some of their incivilities to Sir Edward Berry and the crew of the frigate which Monsieur Lejoille—Mr. Jowl, as we used to call him—and his precious gang of robbers were kind enough to practise on their prisoners.

CHAPTER II.

The black flag was hoisted ; the schooner bore down,
And the merchantman yielded to fate.

Sea Song.

Now, let us change the subject for a while. I'll relate a yarn of my messmate, Tom Toprail, about a ghost: we sailors are rather partial to those gentlemen.

"It's many a day," says Tom, "since I saw it—but I have seen it often in my memory since. We had been sent down in the Glasgow to Rio, about some pirating business which had been carried on there by some of the Spaniards; and we soon set that affair straight, and recovered one or two men, the only survivors out of some fifty or sixty belonging to different ships, the crews of which had walked the plank or been bundled overboard. It is no use being able to

swim ; nothing saves a man but being either a cooper or a barber : one chap was saved because he played the fiddle. This was old Jack, a fellow who could twist a yarn, play a horn-pipe, or sing a stave. I believe he had been concerned in every mischief under the sun : he had belonged to a vessel out of Liverpool, and was shipped as painter, fiddler, barber, seaman, and carpenter : he could do anything, or do nothing ; he was either employed for the ship, or stopping the other men from doing their duty by playing and singing : he had been thirty years at sea.

“ The vessel was bound to the Plate,* and was picked up by a Spanish schooner—a regular black-flag man—a long distance from the coast. The Liverpool ship was called the John and Sarah, and had on board only two popguns and twelve men.

“ When the schooner hove in sight, all hands said their prayers ; for the captain of her was one of your rum and religion men,—a kind of bodies who take to the spirit and only leave

* Rio de la Plata.—Ed.

the ghost of a bottle—people fond of having the *Cove of Cork* as dry as the Goodwin's at low water ; in short, a regular methody parson, —always the more clamorous against the sin they mostly practise.

“ Down came the schooner. It was like a hawk at a sparrow ; for the pirate was determined to claw the John and Sarah, and the latter had no spirits on board excepting what remained in the captain's bottle. There were two men besides old Jack who winked at the guns ; but their minds ran the same ; for after looking at the barking irons, they nodded at each other, as much as to say ‘ No use ; ’ so they went below, clapped on three shirts and their best suits, and then came on deck to see how the affair was to end.

“ The schooner did not sail under false colours ; for when she was within pistol-shot, she fired a long gun right smack at the Liverpool ship, and up went the black flag.

“ I forgot to mention—for I may as well spin the yarn from clew to earring—that the captain had his wife and daughter on board.

The wife was the only half of anything that the captain would have spared without much persuasion; but the daughter was a beautiful creature, just seventeen, and was much more fitted to serve out grog to us old ones on shore, than to be bobbing about the high seas like the buoy at the Nore.

“When the captain, who had said his prayers so heartily, and taken in enough Dutch courage to fight a ghost, saw the black flag, he knew what was coming; and, as old Jack said, he really did believe that no man that ever was born more *cordially* hated his wife and loved his daughter. Her name was Sarah; for she was christened after the owner’s wife; and she was as mild as a West India night, with eyes as bright and as blue as one sees in the skies in these climates.

“The black flag sobered him in a moment; and the crew, as they came aft with terror marked in every face, soon convinced the girl of their fears. There was not a man in the craft that did not love her, for she never spoke without a smile on her face: and who is there

that does not love a fair face which seems to smile in happiness? But as to the captain's missus, there was not a seaman on board that had not said more than twice that she was the devil in petticoats, and would lead the whole batch of them into destruction.

“ Sarah looked in all their faces, but could get no consolation from any : on the contrary, they all looked at her as the victim most likely to be sacrificed. Ay, then it was that her large dark eyes were filled with tears, and her red lips grew white with fear : she was a prize worth the risk of the pirates, for she was above all price. Old Jack was the only one who said a word ; and that was, ‘ Cheer up, miss ! perhaps they won’t murder *you*. But as for your father !—Howsomedever, if they have a ear for music, I don’t think they’ll feed the sharks with my carcass.’

“ This was meant for consolation, and Jack said it kindly ; but somehow it had just the different effect. By way of separating the sheep for slaughter, the pirate hove-to to windward, and fired at the ship as if she had been

a cask put out to practise upon. The colours were doused in a moment, but still the pirate fired. They lowered all their sails on board the Liverpool ship; and this seemed sufficient, for the pirate edged down close alongside, and hailed the ship to send the captain on board. The boat was lowered directly, and the skipper went down below.—There was a scene, thank God! I never saw; and I hope old Jack painted the picture a little too strong.—The daughter pushed the mother away for the last embrace: she clung to her father; no nipper round a messenger, when it's 'thick and dry for weighing,' ever held faster: and even Mrs. Belzebub, the wife, quarrelled for a kiss. And there they would have remained, had not the schooner, which had edged a little to windward, fired another shot, which passed through the cabin and cut the she-devil nearly in half. Old Jack swore that he saw her come out of the companion untouched, and fly away to leeward with the fore-topmast studding-boom, her petticoats spread out like a sail, and she diving about like a Mother Cary's chicken in a gale

“ The daughter, seeing the mother dead, fell upon the body and fainted ; whilst the father, with some hope still left in him, jumped in the boat, in which was old Jack, and went on board the schooner. Here they found the deck crowded with armed men ; fellows with faces like devils, and with their right arms all bare, as if ready to butcher the crew of their prize.

“ The captain of her was one of King John’s men—four feet nought in his shoes, and about as broad as he was long. He spoke English as well as any of us, and he began, before the captain had time to take his hat off, or lift up his leg as he made a bow—

“ ‘ There—none of your civility. Come here. Where is your ship from ?’

“ ‘ Liverpool.’

“ ‘ Are you the captain of her ?’

“ ‘ Yes, sir.’

“ ‘ What is your cargo ?’

“ ‘ Here are the papers, sir.’

“ ‘ Who asked you for papers, you mongrel ! Bring a pair of scissors and cut the fellow’s

tongue out, for it is no use to him if he can't answer as he ought. Do you hear there ?

“ Before you could say Jack Robinson, his tongue was out, and he left bleeding on the deck.

“ ‘ Hand here a hot iron,’ said the pirate : there was one in a moment. ‘ Stop the bleeding for a time, for he must not die yet ;’ and one of the crew opened the poor fellow’s mouth, and then rubbed the hot iron against the sore.

“ ‘ Here, you old-looking scarecrow !’ said the pirate to old Jack ; ‘ look there !’ pointing to the mutilated captain, ‘ and mind *your* tongue. Who are you ?’

“ ‘ I ’m barber, carpenter, cooper, fiddler, and seaman ’

“ ‘ Anything else ?’

“ ‘ Nothing else.’

“ ‘ What ’s her cargo ?’

“ ‘ Don’t know, for I never saw.’

“ ‘ Your eyes don’t seem of much use to you ; so——’

“ Old Jack interrupted, ‘ Except to shave and to *saw*.’

“ ‘ Ah!—How many men are there on board?’ ”

“ ‘ Twelve men and two women.’ ”

“ ‘ Whew !’ went the pirate. ‘ Who are the women ?’ ”

“ ‘ His wife—but she’s killed by the last shot, and his daughter.’ ”

“ ‘ Daughter ! Here, go on board,’ said he to one of his crew, ‘ and bring the rest on board, women and all. And, do you hear ? throw those three chaps overboard ; but keep this fiddler.’ ”

“ Jack had not time to look about him, before his shipmates were struggling in the grasp of the pirates, and three distinct splashes in the water told that the captain’s orders had been obeyed.

“ ‘ Let her forge ahead a little,’ said the captain : for, do you see, even his black soul was willing to be removed from the murder-spot. They put the helm amidships, and she shot ahead in a moment. Jack could not look over the side—he was afraid to move a foot.

“ The boat soon returned. The pirate’s orders had been observed to the very letter : two

female forms were in the stern sheets, and both apparently dead—both covered with blood ; whilst the rest of the crew sat between the thwarts of the boat, looking as if the pirate need not give orders for their execution. They came alongside : the low deck of the schooner was hardly higher than the boat's gunwale ; a kind of door was opened, and the crew of the ' John and Sarah ' were told to get on board. What they thought when they saw the captain stretched on the deck writhing in horrible pain, with his tongue by his side, Jack could not tell ; but they walked by the mainmast of the schooner, where old Jack was standing, as one sheep follows the other, and as if hope could be increased by their herding together, or as if they could resist the better should the butchers fall among them.

“ ‘ Hand up the women ! ’ said the captain.

“ In vain poor Sarah had wound her arms round the body of the mother ; the strong arm of the pirates soon separated the living from the dead ; and the daughter's scream, when she was torn from her parent, reached the ear of her father.

He started upon his feet ; his swollen face, his burnt lips, quivering with pain, and seemingly endeavouring to give utterance to his wishes. The dead body of the mother was thrown at his feet—at the feet of the husband was the corpse of the wife thrown ; and then, whatever might have been her faults living, it was evident her husband forgave them all. He looked from the dead to the living ; for Sarah rushed into his arms, saying, ‘ My father ! my father ! —oh, save me ! save me ! ’ Her hair had got adrift from the combs which had bound it together, and the long locks hung in disorder over her shoulders ; she had hidden her face in his neck. At last, after clinging to him, as if to fix her hands so that no mortal could separate them, she looked in his face, and seeing the terrible mutilation, gave one loud shriek, and fell over her mother.

“ The scene, terrible to any to behold, had operated on the crew of that fatal ship, who knew the sweet disposition of the daughter and the better qualities of the father ; and although

their own situation was sufficiently awful, they forgot themselves to weep for her.

“ The captain of the pirate stood close to the companion unmoved, his eyes rather gloating over the beautiful features of his captive. Death was a sight so common to him, that he cared not how often he saw it. But the woman—and such a woman !—she awoke every bad passion ; he resolved to gratify his wishes, and was not at all unconcerned at the anguish he occasioned the dying man. The captain of the prize still remained standing, although it was evidently an exertion which could not last many moments : his eyes were upon his wife and daughter, one dead, the other worse than dead ; for even the father could not hope that he might escape the degradation which she was certain to experience.

“ ‘ Here,’ said the pirate, ‘ take that girl to my cabin ; and, do you hear ?’ (he whispered something to his nearest man,) ‘ and be quick.’

“ ‘ Ay, ay, sir,’ said the man in good English. To another he spoke in Spanish ; and

the two came to take hold of the girl. As they stooped, the father kicked them so violently on the head, that they both fell back : it was the last effort of a parent to protect his only child.

“ ‘ What ’s this ! ’ said the pirate captain, jumping round the companion, and seizing the girl in his grasp. Lord love you ! it was like a terrier snapping a rat ; he lifted her like an infant, although she clung to her mother ; and when that hold gave way, she took a fresh nip at her father’s hand. He leant forward, more from weakness than intention ; and as he fell, he stuck his knife up to the hilt in the pirate’s shoulder. The blade remained in, for he never withdrew it ; the exertion had overpowered him, and he fell on the deck.

“ The last thing the girl saw, as the pirate threw her down the companion, was her father tossed overboard, and the mother following.

“ The man who acted as surgeon stepped forward and withdrew the knife. It had made a good wound, but nothing serious : it was dressed in a quarter of an hour, during which

time he never uttered a word about pain, but gave directions about the prize and the prisoners. The latter were all lashed with their hands behind them, and seized to the bits near the mainmast, old Jack and all. The vessel was ransacked and plundered; everything small and of value was removed to the pirate; and then a few men were sent on board, all of whom but two were English, and she made sail away.

“It was now getting fast towards sunset; and old Jack never thought to see it rise again. He, however, kept his spirits up better than the rest, because he had been already saved when passion was the strongest. He thought the blood-letting would cool the captain a bit; but he was wrong there, for it only made him the more riotous. He had been down in his cabin, and the half-stifled shriek of the girl had been heard; but shortly afterwards all was silent. The men fore and aft the decks were sharing out their plunder, and never even heeded the prisoners, who now had a little time to whisper to each other, not only their

fears, but their hopes of escape. The man at the helm seemed to have command of the schooner, which was slipping slowly through the water; and darkness was coming on. When the prisoners saw the captain coming on deck, their hearts were in their mouths in a second.

“When a man is lashed and can’t get a fling for his life, it’s a kind of *fortune de guerre* that no one envies.

“Poor devils! they expected more than they wanted; no less than to walk the plank!

“When the captain came on deck, he stood listening at the companion: he called his boy and whispered in his ear, and the boy went down below, and the prisoners had their eyes fixed upon the murderer. He first looked at the compass—all sailors do that when they come on deck, and any man on board a man-of-war might know the purser from one of the lieutenants without the uniform: one looks at the compass, and then at the sails; and the other looks at his feet, to see if the lower deck dry holy stone dust is stuck to his shoes.

“ But to heave ahead and to tell about the ghost.

“ Well, after the captain had looked about him, he sees the prisoners, and he came close up to them. He looked at the first one who was nearest to him, and said he,

“ ‘ What ’s your name ?’

“ ‘ Richard Brookes, sir.’

“ ‘ How long have you been at sea ?’

“ ‘ Eight years, sir.’

“ ‘ Did you ever cut a man’s throat, or pick his pocket ?’

“ ‘ Never, sir.’

“ ‘ Can you swim ?’ said he, pointing to the water.

“ ‘ Yes, sir.’

“ ‘ Which do you choose to do,—commit a murder, or—’ pointing to the gangway.

“ Brookes remained silent.

“ The captain gave a nod of his head, and one or two of the men came aft. They seemed to understand the business: one tied a piece of canvass over poor Brookes’s eyes, whilst the

other placed a broad plank which was on the booms over the taffrail to windward, the end projecting over the boat astern. Brookes was then cast off, his hands loosened: the captain walked aft, and they saw Sarah placed on the companion ladder; her hands were tied behind her, her dress almost torn from her shoulders, and her head was turned towards the stern. Brookes was led blindfolded to the plank, along which he walked, the two pirates keeping him straight. No sooner had he passed the taffrail, than two other men lifted the plank from the deck, and Brookes slipped overboard: he screamed as he fell, and Sarah's voice was not mute. Oh, it must have been dreadful for those poor fellows left behind to have heard Brookes's voice gradually growing less and less as the schooner increased her distance, shrieking for mercy. The evening was almost calm, at least there was little wind, and the craft, built like a wedge, slipped silently through the water. At last the sounds grew fainter and fainter, and then ceased altogether. He was a strong swimmer.

“The only remark the captain made was this: ‘I wonder if the pilot-fish are on the look-out; for their masters will have a feast to-night.’ Those fish, always find the food for those sea-devils, sharks; and whenever you see the little coupee blue and white fish, you may be certain the large one is near at hand.

“There were six more to finish, including old Jack; and great was the pluck shown by all of them.

“‘Will you swim, or commit a murder?’ said the captain to William Hindmarsh.

“Hindmarsh had a wife and family, and was a quiet well-disposed man; but he was none of the bravest, at least so his shipmates fancied; and there’s no doubt that the thoughts of his wife and his dear little daughter must have made him think that, by joining the pirates, which he took the last question to mean, might give him an opportunity of returning, perhaps without the sin fastened to his soul; so he answered, ‘Commit the murder.’

“‘Then throw that girl overboard!’ said the captain.

“ Hindmarsh’s face grew in an instant into a resolution none could mistake. He said, ‘ May the Lord have mercy upon me ! for I will rather die ten thousand times.’

“ ‘ Indeed !’ said the captain ; ‘ then we will take you at your word.’

“ ‘ Bring the scissors and the hot iron.’

“ ‘ I ’ll do it, sir ; but spare me.’

“ ‘ Then do it ;’ and he was cut loose. He walked aft to Sarah : every one of his ship-mates called out to him not to touch a hair of her head ; but when he got near her, he made one spring, cleared the way to the taffrail, and giving a leap, was overboard and drowned.

“ It was at this moment that a vessel was seen on the larboard bow ; for it was not quite dark, and just the last glimmer of daylight. The man aloft had seen the stranger : it made life shorter to the rest, for they were bundled overboard, every mother’s son of them, but old Jack and Sarah. The latter was taken below and put to bed, the boy being left to watch her ; whilst all sail was cracked on the schooner in chase, the decks cleared of the plunder, and every-

thing got ready for a fight. When this was done, old Jack was called.

“ ‘ What do you say you can do ?’

“ ‘ I ’m a carpenter, a cooper, a barber, a fiddler, and a sailor.’

“ ‘ Jack-of-all-trades and master of none, I suppose,’ said the captain. ‘ Here, boy, hand up my violin. And do you hear, you old scoundrel, take care how you play, for I shall judge by that of your other callings ; and do you mind—’ and he pointed to the gangway.

“ This was the hardest trial of them all : when a man’s life depends upon his playing well upon such an instrument as the violin—it is not like the guitar, for that has the notes marked, but this depends entirely upon the nerves and the ear of the performer. Well, Jack said that he could play very decently, and that he had no fears before about his *execution* ; but now, you see, it is like enough he thought about both, in the way of being bow-strung or *a-bridged*, like Hindmarsh. It is for all the world like telling a sailor to make his defence before a court

of captains ; it is a hundred to one if the sight of the skippers does not take the talk out of him if he had any to lose. And what 's a foremast man's lingo to the first lieutenant's, or perhaps his own commander's,—a man that Jack has been taught to obey, and to stand with his hat off when he speaks to him on the quarter-deck. That ought all to be altered, Ben ; its not giving the sailor a fair chance, I know that, for I was present when Johnson was tried.

“ Well, old Jack took the fiddle, and he strikes up ‘ Moll in the Wad ’ with so much spirit that these devils in trowsers began to dance ; then he changed it to the hornpipe, and away the fellows went along the deck, with a double shuffle and cut, just as light of heart as if the eleven men they had just murdered had never been amongst them. Even the Spaniards took the cigars from their mouths to laugh ; and that proves how he carried away the heads and heels of all present : for a Spaniard never leaves off smoking, not even in bed, I believe ; and as for laughing, why, they are like Turks,—they

think laughing a kind of exercise which requires work, and they never work even by thinking.

“ ‘ You ’ll do,’ said the captain. ‘ When you have done with him, my lads, give him some supper and let him go to bed: we want a cooper and a barber, and he ’ll do well enough ; —besides, we can make him visit the sharks when ——’

“ They lost sight of the chase about an hour after, and it came on to blow fresh: the sails were managed, old Jack said, in proper seaman-like style, and the captain understood his trade in all its branches. About midnight they kept a bright look-out, but they could not hit upon the stranger; and when morning came, she was out of sight. They then altered the course, and stood towards Rio Janeiro.

“ Old Jack was determined to make the best of his situation, and lay by for a good opportunity of slipping his cable; and he soon was introduced into the cabin to shave the captain. There he saw Sarah, always in tears, and

always endeavouring to make him understand something; but the pirate generally made the girl sit before him, so that Jack could not shave him and see her at the same time. About a week after the capture, and when they were approaching the land, a large ship was reported when the captain was getting his chin mowed; up he jumps, and leaves the two together.

“ ‘Old Jack,’ said Sarah, ‘cut his throat, or I shall be ruined.’

“ ‘And so shall I, miss, if I do it. Wait until we get into harbour.’

“ ‘It will be too late if he is not killed by to-morrow, and I have not the heart to do it.’

“ ‘Nor I the inclination to have my tongue cut out and thrown to the sharks.’

“ ‘Jack, Jack! would you see me ruined?’

“ ‘No, miss; certainly not, if I could help it: I would rather marry you myself.’

“ ‘Oh! gracious God, what shall I do!—Defend me, O Lord, from this cruel trial!’

“ Here she was interrupted by the return of

the half-shaven captain. Old Jack was stroping the razor, and Sarah, as usual, crying.

“ ‘ Come, Jack, finish your job as quick as you can without cutting my throat. But,’ said he, as he continued singing,

‘ The sea is deep, and the man that ’s slim,
And carries good weight of bone,
Will have a long and a silent swim,
If he swims as well as a stone ;

and I don’t much think Hindmarsh has got down, for he has lots of toll-gates in the shape of sharks to pass; and, like those on shore, old Jack, there is no trust.’

“ As you may suppose, this made old Jack think that he had been overheard, and he very seriously thought of doing the job. But old Jack was no fool, and he knew that the chief mate would soon claim Sarah and despatch him; and thus arguing that no good would come to either, he finished his work, whipped up his soapsuds and strop, and toddled off forward among his companions.

“ He had already become a great favourite, for he was always useful and always willing; he

sang a jolly song ; played a good tune, and could scrape his legs along the deck like a clown at a fair ; besides which, he never lost his temper.

“ ‘ What ’s the ship, lads ? ’ said he.

“ ‘ What ship, old boy ? ’ said one of the pirates ; ‘ there ’s nothing in sight.’

“ ‘ Then what the devil made the captain jump up when I was shaving him ? ’

“ ‘ Why, he sometimes does that when he wants to hear what is going on in the cabin ; for he has got another berth which communicates with the after-cabin, and he went down there just now.’

“ Old Jack turned away quite sick, and looked at the water alongside, as much as to say, ‘ My days are numbered, and you are to be my grave.’

“ Two days afterwards they made the land about Rio. Jack had shaved the captain every morning, and his fears were rubbed off. Twice the captain left the cabin, and instantly Jack communicated to Sarah where he was gone ; so he went on the other tack, saying,

“ ‘ He is a very nice man, miss, and will

make you very happy : I dare say he loves you dearly.'

"To this Sarah could not reply, for her heart was overflowing with grief. 'Never, never !' she only said.

"Well, the schooner got safe to her anchors, under Spanish colours ; and the first thing Jack saw was an English man-of-war close to the pirate. 'My bobs !' thought he, 'but I'll do it now !' Sarah had never left the cabin, and was very ill indeed : poor soul ! she had got as thin as a marline-spike. The captain was on deck, and Jack said as he passed, 'Here's an English man-of-war close on board of us.' She sprang from her bed-place and tried to rush on deck : old Jack caught her, and said, 'Get back—leave it to me.'

" 'You'll do it then ?'

" 'I'll try,' said Jack.

"Down came the captain. 'Sarah,' said he, 'you must jump up and come on shore.' She looked astonished, as if all hope was gone. 'Go on deck, old Jack ; and when she's dressed I want you to shave me.'

“ Jack did as he was desired ; for he was no match for the pirate, even with a razor in his hand. He looked at the Glasgow, for he could not keep his eyes off her ; and this was noticed by his shipmates.

“ ‘ It is no use, old Jack,’ said one : ‘ she’s going to sea directly ; they are heaving round now, and the anchor is nearly a short stay ; so don’t stand making faces over the taffrail—trudge away forward.’

“ It was evident that the poor fellow was well watched, and that although he was within hail of succour, yet he had no chance of making himself heard ; for had he begun, his voice would have been gagged in a second. He heard the merry notes of the fife as the men worked at the capstan to the stamp and go, keeping time with the music on board the Glasgow ; and when the ‘ Away aloft !’ was shouted, away went the hands scudding up the rigging to obey the orders. Jack saw the ‘ let fall ’ obeyed ; he saw the topsails at the mast-head ; and as the Glasgow was close up to the pirate, he heard the first-lieutenant call out ‘ Ship the

bars !' and hailing the forecastle, he said, ' Let 's know when the anchor is up and down.' Jack was then standing by the mainmast, with his shaving apparatus ready, with two men, one on each side of him ; and he knew that they were placed to hinder him from hailing. They were stout men ; whilst old Jack was as thin as his own razor, and as weak as West India swizzle.

“ ‘ Send the barber here,’ said the captain.

“ Old Jack went down with a beating heart and shaking hand. The captain had his shirt collar open ; whilst Sarah was dressed all ready to go on shore, in the very newest bonnet saved from the plunder. She gave Jack a look which, poor fellow ! he understood well enough. He placed his box upon the table, dipped in the brush, and lathered the bull-throat of the pirate. He took the razor and began his work : his hand trembled and he cut the lip ; the blood began to flow — the sight of it restored him to more confidence. ‘ Up and down, sir !’ he heard distinctly from the Glasgow ; then ‘ Thick and dry for weighing !’ He

drew the razor across the captain's throat, and nearly severed his head from his body. In an instant Jack was overboard, and one of the pirates after him. He swam well — his pursuer also. Jack hailed ; the boatswain saw and heard ; the boats were hooked on for hoisting, one shoved off instantly, and the pirate had just placed his hand upon the back of his victim, when the boat saved them both. The story was told in a minute, and expedition used in both vessels. The pirate had cut her cables and was making sail ; the Glasgow weighed and fired right into her : all exertion was useless ; she was captured, anchored, and Sarah saved. The dead captain was buried on the shore, close to a large tree ; and I was one who dug the grave and placed him in it.

“ As the vessel was under Spanish colours, it was requisite to inform the authorities, and to claim the vessel legally ; and this, with the ‘ *poco, a poco* ’ gentlemen, requires time. Jack never held up his head but he thought always of the act, which every one justified : but, it was at his heart that he felt uneasy. ‘ Tom,’

said he to me one day, ‘I think my mind would be easier if I went on shore to the grave and stuck up a cross.’ ‘We’ll get liberty,’ said I.’ So we did,—our captain was a Christian,—and there was not a man in the craft who did not honour old Jack for the thought. We were landed at the town, and had leave to remain until nine at night, when the boat was to be on shore for the liberty-men. We got to the grave about sunset, and we sat down by the tree. It was a beautiful evening, and the water washed the shore without a ripple: everything was still as death; and, with the exception of the chirping of the birds, the noise of the crickets, and the buzz of the mosquitoes, it was like his grave.

“Jack sat by the tree, his face covered with his hands, saying his prayers. I did not disturb him, although I saw the twilight was fast going, the clouds rising, and night almost at hand. About eight it was dark,—dark as pitch. ‘The lightning and the thunder began, and Jack awoke as it were from a dream, holding the cross in his hand. He turned to me;

but I was no man then. He said, ‘Come and place it, Tom, at his head—I killed him in cold blood—come.’ I could not stir: I trembled like a leaf, and I remained seated.

“ ‘Why, what ails you?’ said he; ‘he’s dead—dead, and cold, and buried—there!’ A flash of lightning came at the moment, and I saw something move on the grave;—ay, I saw the eyes look fiercely at him, for he was the nearest;—and he saw it too, and trembled. At last he got near the grave, and he placed the cross on the head. Another flash came; I saw the body without the head carried away; a growl succeeded, the cross was thrown down, and old Jack fell down on the grave, and I ran back to the town, and never spoke until we had got on board.”

CHAPTER III.

'Tis unmanly to chatter behind people's back,
But 'tis pretty well known that the lady's a crack;
Besides, if those things about beauty be true,
That there is but one Venus, why, I say there's two.

DIBDIN.

BUT to return to my story. After the battle of the Nile I grew an inch taller. At every place we were looked upon as conquerors. Mr. Davison, the agent, had medals struck in gold, silver, gilt metal, and copper. I had a silver one,—the admiral got it for me; and I keep it at home, screwed up in the canvass, as bright and as new as the day it came out to us.

It was on the 22nd September that the Vanguard, none the worse for her shot-holes,—for

they, like the medals and crosses, are the badges of bravery,—came in sight of Naples. It was here we saw the first fruits of our victory. The bay was crowded with boats, full of thousands of lovely creatures, all waving their handkerchiefs, all kissing their hands. Music was playing in all directions: and as for flags, there were enough to have supplied the fleet with bunting for three years. And these gaities in the front, and the loveliness of that bay in the rear, was a sight worth seeing.

The Alexander had arrived before us, and the whole of liberated Italy, at least the coast about Naples, seemed to have got into boats to welcome Nelson. As we neared the anchorage, Sir William and Lady Hamilton led the squadron of boats, and they came alongside. I had seen *her* once before, but I never saw any woman look more lovely: they made a Venus of her afterwards.

No sooner did she get on deck, than she embraced the admiral, and fainted. There was the devil to pay, for the king was coming on board;

and although we were three leagues from the anchorage, his Majesty had come out to shake hands with Lord Nelson, and call him his deliverer. But the best of all the sights was to see the *lazzaroni*, as they call the mob, all coming near the ships with bird-cages, and letting the little creatures have their liberty. What the birds had to do with it I don't know, but I suspect that they must have been deucedly frightened when the Orient blew up.

Lord Nelson's birthday occurred shortly afterwards ; and then it was that he became so disgusted with the whole batch of idlers, that he called them a country of fiddlers, poets, fies, and scoundrels. He was right : he knew them well, for there they were, doing nothing but squalling about the streets, or twanging a cursed guitar, or seeing the dancers at the big theatre. The first time I went in the pit, as they call it, of the St. Carlos, and saw the women standing on one leg, like so many adjutant-birds, and then twisting round and round like a weathercock-man in a squall, I thought

to myself that it was just for all the world like naked women, and I got as red in the face as a boiled lobster.

The Neapolitans were all alike. The king did nothing but shoot, and hunt, and kill boars. The queen—I heard all kind of stories about her—she was no better than she ought to have been ; so that we were in a pretty mess, and I was glad enough when in October we sailed for Malta. The French had it ; but we were going to see if they could live on that rock without food. Gozo surrendered a week after we had shown ourselves ; and we left Captain Ball to finish Malta, and returned to Naples. Here we embarked five thousand Neapolitans, and landed them at *Leghorn* ; and had there been a shot fired, they would have tipped us *leg* bail.

We returned again to Naples ; and it was about this time that one General Mack, and General St. Philip were marched to meet the French, at the head of thirty-two thousand men. They fell in with three thousand, and all hands used their legs. There never was such a set of cowardly vermin. Although they

only lost forty men in all, yet they contrived to leave behind—not honour,—they had none of that,—but their tents, baggage, ammunition and all. This left the high road to Naples open; and in the town there were plenty of idle fellows ready to get up a mutiny. They call it a revolution, but they are one and the same thing; so that we began on board the ships to get ready for a start or a breeze. I knew the admiral expected passengers, for I had orders every day to have the cabin separated with bulkheads, to run screens along the deck, and so on; and every night the boats were sent to a small opening, and returned on board deeply laden with gold and silver, and paintings and jewels, to the amount of two million and a half.

On the night of the 21st of December, the admiral directed that three barges should be in attendance at the place. It was blowing pretty sharply, and there was a heavy sea running. Of course, I was there: I steered his barge that night. We were at our station; but we saw no one to give any orders, and we

lay bobbing about waiting for news. About half-past eight, it was as dark as pitch. We heard the admiral hail, and we pulled in directly. First of all comes a stout chap, rolled up in as many cloaks as would have covered the starboard watch of the Vanguard: he was looking about him in all directions, and was very anxious to get away. Then comes another fat thing, I could not make out what it was; then the admiral,—faith! I knew him. No sooner had we cleared the coast, than I recognised the king and queen through the disguise they wore. They had escaped from their subjects, and were indebted to Lady Hamilton and Nelson for their delivery. Well, I thought to myself that crowns were pretty coins — but great weights. Here was a sovereign, a man who a month before was the idol of his people; they bowed as he passed,—nay, some of them crossed themselves, as if good fortune awaited the glance of a monarch;—and now, here he was in an open boat, and a rough sea, protected by foreigners, afraid of his own countrymen, and looking to each dash of the

oar as providing for his retreat. I began to think, that it is a great consolation for a man to be contented in that station of life unto which it has pleased God to call him. So I fancy myself; and I am just as happy in spinning the yarn of my life, as if I were bedizened in gold, and made to attend upon a king.

It is no use my running up the log of all we did at this time, because I don't exactly understand it: but this I know, that I saw the Prince Caraccioli dangling to the fore yard-arm, and pulled round the frigate with Nelson and Lady Hamilton in the boat. I shan't say a word about that execution. I do not like to think of it; for every one says it was an *error* of Nelson's: and as I can't bring myself to believe he ever committed an error, as an officer,—mind, I say, as an officer; and I can't say that his lordship acted,—But no matter. However, the affair reminds me of the ghost; for about three weeks afterwards, when the king was on board of us, we saw the old prince rise from the bottom of the sea; and that gave his lordship a shock which all

the guns in St. Elmo never could have given. A boat was sent to get the body and to bury it ashore ; but I 'm blessed if it did not nearly create a mutiny. When the cutter's crew was called away, only two men got in the boat ; and when, after much calling and starting, we got all of them in the boat, it was quite awful to see how the poor fellows clapped their oars in the water, and tried, when they took them out, to stop the effect they had produced. When they got near to him, even the midshipman did not like it, and the boat kept pulling round and round him, like a cooper round a cask. No one liked to touch it, for they had all seen it hung ; and as it rose with the swell of the sea, it seemed to surge towards the land, from which it had been treacherously taken. He was buried on shore ; and some say he walks about Naples every night, and that on the anniversary of his execution he wears a rope round his neck—a kind of collar for an order of knighthood.

We landed our royal cargo on the 26th, having experienced a most riotous gale of wind,

during which one of the princesses was taken ill and died in Lady Hamilton's arms.

Now I'm not going to talk like a philosopher ; but this I must say, that although the great people have been pleased to abuse Lady Hamilton right and left, yet, I say, she had more heart, more courage, than a whole regiment of Neapolitan soldiers. She was a wonderful woman ; she did not know what fear was. Some say her heart was naturally revengeful : I say that, more or less, we are all so. The most powerful are generally the most lenient. The great man does not act himself ; but he has hundreds of screws to weigh the greatest weight. We revenge the insult only in one way ; the great and the powerful in a thousand unseen acts. Is it any wonder, then, that a woman should be revengeful ? It's all moonshine finding fault with any one for an act which belongs to our natures. If you are struck, don't you cry to be revenged ? If insulted, don't we ask for revenge ? (and words hit harder than blows.) If disappointed, we wish for revenge : in short, in every moment

of our life the bad passion is uppermost ; and who can condemn us, if occasionally it breaks adrift from the cable-tier of its confinement, and takes its own retaliation ?

It was in Sicily that they made Nelson a duke. His title was Duke of Thunder,—for Bronte means thunder,—and we used to call him Thunder and Lightning between decks. And there he was a duke ; whilst I, who had served in every action with him, from the time he fought the bear until he hung the prince, was a coxswain ! I might have been a warrant ; but what 's a gunner to a duke ? And if I had been a duke, I should never have known the delight of writing my life, so I am, as I always was, contented with my station.

I won't talk about Malta ; but I'll just say what it was that made Nelson quit the Mediterranean in 1800. It was because Lord Keith was appointed to the command, and Sir Sydney Smith had a squadron in those seas not under the control of Nelson. I came all the way home with him by land ; and we had Sir William and Lady Hamilton

with us. We had an Italian, who taught me a little of his lingo; and I in return made an English scholar of him. He had been on board the *Foudroyant* with us, and I made a man of him. He was a capital cook, and used to dress those "tobacco-pipes made easy," maccaroni, so well without breaking them, that I have known him put a hundred and twenty fathom, the length of a cable, down his throat, and stow it away in the tiers of his stomach, without one bend riding over the other! Now, some who don't swallow quite so well, may perhaps disbelieve it; but, after all, I only said, it went down through the *mouth* of the tier without a *bight*,—and that's not so bad either.

We went through Germany; and of all the sights I ever saw, I never clapped eyes upon anything the like of this. At Prince Esterhazy's—there used to be a hundred grenadiers, all six feet high, who waited at table: there was not a man of them that couldn't have clapped me in their pockets, and my head would never have come clear of the hole.

They wanted to shove one of your long-

togged gingerbread coats on me; but I didn't want any cloth *tails*;—hadn't I one of my own to cover my stern? “No,” said I; “we sailors are all fair and above board,—no disguise about us: here you see our shape and build, and no mistake; but if you were unrigged, and had nothing over your mast-heads, and no paint on your hulls, I'm thinking I could thrash any four of you.” I must say this for them,—they stuffed me as if I had been a turkey for Christmas.

They made as much of the admiral as if he had been their king. After this we got on towards Hamburg; and it is not for me, who ever received kindness, to say one word about his lordship: but that woman!—Ah! that was it. I never shall see anything like her again: and yet sometimes, when one walks over Westminster-bridge, or goes to the fair, we see faces that the whole world could not rival. Then, to look at their feet, when a breeze takes their canvass a little aback, or keeps it shivering like a topsail lowered for reefing! And this I

know,—for I have been east and west, north and south,—that in no part of the world are women to be seen like those of our dear little island. Lord bless them! I love them all.

CHAPTER IV.

Such havoc, such slashing,
Guns firing, swords clashing,
The battle grows warm :
Shot on shot quick are pour'd in,
Then grappling and boarding ;
Man to man, arm to arm.

Sea Song.

LOVE is a very pretty thing, and I don't envy the man who has never felt what a plesure it is. Time then goes rapidly ; and if a man stands at a corner to catch a glimpse of a pretty girl, why a couple of hours are gone before he finds out if the weather is hot or cold. Ay, and when he does see her, his heart keeps jumping up and down enough to break adrift the buttons of his waist-coat. And then they talk ; and after they have talked for a couple of hours, they have said

nothing : and then they go to church, and say enough to last them all their lives.

Well, another man fights through life ; from the moment he is thirteen to the day before he is stretched for a full due, he is engaged with either his own or his country's enemies ; he goes about to every nation and every people ; he leads an unquiet, restless life, and yet he manages to be happy : he has no home in which he will remain ; and as for giving up the tack for tack to get to windward of his equals, to bear up for a snug harbour of contentment in the country, he would just as soon clew up, and come to an anchor at once.

Then there's the quiet man, who does nothing but look over his account-book and his garden, and who spends half his life in seeing a rose blossom, or a potatoe grow : he is happy. The soldier is happy, excepting when he is tired, and obliged to lie down in a ditch ; the sailor is happier the stronger it blows, and the quicker his ship sails. And then we all die ; and I'm blessed if I can make out what we have all been about when we lived ! Then

comes the boatswain's pipe for us, and the trumpet for them ; and I don't think, from bishop to ploughboy, any one of us can say that we have done our duty below, and been useful.

When we arrived in England, never was there such a reception given to any man as was given to the admiral. We landed at Yarmouth in 1800. Every ship in the harbour wore her colours, and the mayor and his corporation (he was a plaguy fat man, and that's the reason they call him both, which was very personal,) came out to welcome him ; and all hands went in procession to church. And when night came, they lit it up with bonfires and fireworks, and other combustibles. Through every place we passed the same signs of joy took place ; and when we got home, there was the ear ready to listen, the eye to drop a tear, the arms to embrace : but although Nelson's heart was once hers, it was now evidently that of another's.

I was met by little Jane ; and when I held her in my arms and kissed the dear little creature, all my heart and soul returned to the

memory of past times, and I felt as if I could have been either married or transported (they don't always mean the same thing) to anybody to have been the father of such a child.

When the admiral called me, he looked at me as if he envied me, for his happiness was gone for ever—he never recovered it. Before we had been on shore a week, an evident coolness between him and Lady Nelson took place: it was not the same thing as formerly; she was often in tears, and he was restless and unhappy. He used frequently to kiss little Jane, and once said, “Honour is a fine bauble, glory is a great name, but innocence and youth are worth them all!” At last the coolness grew daily more evident. Nelson was never at home to dinner; he no longer listened to the voice of his wife; her words were not sweet in his ear; and at the expiration of three months he left her entirely. Jane overheard the last words he ever said to her; they were added after he had taken his last embrace: “I call God to witness, there is nothing in you or your conduct that I wish otherwise!” No; it was his own

fault. I can bear witness to her unceasing love, admiration, and affection of him. And it is hard, very hard, when a woman knows her husband is the first man in the universal world, and dotes on him, to see him loitering in the room of another; to be left unprotected, because a more beautiful woman happens to fix upon him. Ay, ay, I remember it all: it made me unhappy; it made Jane unhappy, for she was removed to Lady Hamilton's; but as she was petted and caressed by her, she soon got reconciled. Lord! she would have made the devil in love with her if she chose, for she had the sweetest voice that ever whispered mischief in a mortal's ear!

Fortunately for us all, Lord Nelson got his blue bunting at the fore, and was appointed second in command under Sir Hyde Parker in the Baltic. We sailed in the *St. George*, but afterwards changed into the *Elephant*. We started from Yarmouth Roads on the 12th of March 1801. There was a difference of opinion as to what we were to do, and how we were

to set about it; but Lord Nelson was all “for taking the bull by the horns,” as he said. I remember I was in the cabin when the different plans were proposed. Nelson was all for the short-cut; “And,” said he, “the measure might be thought bold, but the boldest measures are the safest.”

It was on the 29th of March, the wind whistling merrily from the north-west, blowing a double-reefed top-sail breeze, that we weighed, in order to pass the Sound. Nelson led the van: his flag was on board Foley’s ship, the *Elephant*; Sir Hyde Parker the centre, and Admiral Graves the rear. The passage of the Sound is about three miles wide; and the castle of *Elsineur*, and close to it that of *Cronenburgh*, on the Danish coast, command more than half-way across; whilst the guns from *Hel-sinburg* could reach over the spot where the shots from *Elsineur* would fall; so that, go which way you would, either one side or the other, or mid-channel, the shot were sure to whistle over our heads: and they must have

been bad marksmen to miss us all, for we had fifty-one sail with us, and out of this number sixteen were ships of the line.

We were going into action now with stone walls, where we had no mast to fire away, and give three cheers as it fell. The Monarch went first; and no sooner had she reached mid-channel, than a hundred guns, and mortars by scores, opened upon her. The shot fell like hail; but they did no damage, and were more like a Turkish salute than an angry fire. It was only fit to be laughed at; for no sooner did the admiral perceive that the Swedish shore never fired, than our fleet hauled over that side, keeping out of range of the Danish guns; and although they blazed away during the whole time of the passage, not a man was touched. In the evening we were all at anchor between the Island of Huen and Copenhagen.

No sooner had the fleet anchored, than a council of war was held on board Sir Hyde Parker's ship; and a lugger, which belonged to our fleet, was seen standing in-shore reconnoitring the enemy's position. And it was no joke

to see such a line of galleys, fire-ships, gun-boats, line-of-battle ships, radeaus, pontoons, with large batteries, and such like, extending nearly four miles; but I heard Nelson say, "he wished it had been eight." We had got so used to fighting, that we thought nothing of half-a-dozen batteries. We had to buoy the channel to get at them, for the Danes knew how to throw every obstacle in our way,—and we knew how to remove them.

I remember, when I told this yarn to Jack Halyard, who was in Howe's action, and who was one of your regular barge's crew,—such a chap! with the handsomest face and the largest quid in the fleet!—says I to him, as we sat at our mess-table, whilst we were emptying the kid of grog, "I must have some biscuits, or I shall never make you understand this action without I place the batteries and the ships. This big one stands for Copenhagen,—and this one represents the middle ground: it's about two leagues from the city. And this," said I, as I dipped my finger into the kid, "this represents the channel between

the middle ground and the town: it's called the King's Channel, and is deeper than this allowance of ours. I wish we could fill it up; you see I have to put my fingers such a way down before I get enough to mark a channel.—Well, along this channel the Danes had got their line of defence, as close to the shore as possible.

“ They had nineteen ships; there—there they are, nineteen of them: those are the floating-batteries, and these round ones are the crown-batteries.—They are artificial islands at the mouth of the harbour; and this one, the largest, had sixty-six guns. There—there it is, all right!

“ Well, on the 1st of April our fleet anchored here, off the north-west end of the middle ground; and I,—for I was Nelson's servant then,—assisted at the signals, lent a hand to hoist the old flags, ‘prepare for battle;’ whilst Nelson went on board the Amazon, commanded by that brave fellow Riou, to take a last look of the ships and their position. He returned at one A.M. and we all weighed.

“ Along here,” I continued, making another

line of grog, “ was a narrow channel between the Island of Saltholm and the middle ground : this is the island.”

“ Avaust there, Ben !” said Jack ; “ you have taken away one of the artificial islands.”

“ Well, now it is all right. This channel we had buoyed. Riou led the way in the Amazon, and the small fry kept sounding on both sides of us. We coasted along the outer ridge of the shoal,—along here, you see,—and we anchored off Draco Point just at dark ; the headmost of the Danish ships being about two miles from us.

“ Such work as we had on board that night ! Lord Nelson was as tired as a smuggler after he has run his cargo, and I was sent for to ask him to lie down in his cot, which I placed on the deck,* whilst he told the clerks what orders to write ; and he kept me running up and down the hatchway like a messenger-

* Southey mentions that all persuasion was unavailing, until Allen, his old servant, used that kind of authority which long and affectionate services entitled and enabled him to assume :—Ben Brace is Allen.—ED.

boy, every five minutes, to see which way the wind was. He was in high spirits, and kept them all alive. He had only Riou and Foley with him ; the rest of the captains had gone on board their own ships, but most of them had dined on board the Elephant. Nelson never thought of going to sleep ; he kept hurrying the clerks, and asking ‘ how the wind was.’ I know I wished it had been very ill and *died* into a calm.

“ At daybreak it was fair. Nelson was up ; signal was flying for all captains, and every preparation made. Then came the affair of the pilots : none of them liked being shot at ; one fellow was not certain how much water there was here—another thought it deeper there ; and between one and the other, we might have remained gaping at the Danes until now, had not Mr. Bryerly, the master of the Bellona, offered to take in the fleet. He had a determined look that man, and they ought to have made him bishop of marines at least for his coolness. His services were accepted, and he went on board the Edgar, Captain Murray,

which ship led the way. It was half-past nine when we weighed; the signal being ‘to weigh in succession.’ The next ship was the old *Agamemnon*. I could have cried like a baby, when I saw her fail in endeavouring to clear this part of the shoal, and she ran aground, like *Troubridge* in the *Culloden*: there she stuck hard and fast; and although *Nelson* and I d——d the shoal sufficiently to have moved it had it had any heart, yet there was the old *Agamemnon* out of the action, although every man on board of her worked like a dray-horse. The ship in which we had had so many brushes, and which followed *Nelson* like a shadow, to be caught by this infernal point and held like a chap in the bilboes! The *Polly-phemus* took her place; but some time was lost, and the *Edgar* was unsupported, and the *Polly* could not manage to reach her proper station, owing to the difficulty of the channel, and the leading ship being too far ahead to serve as a pilot.

“Then away went the *Isis*; she was all right enough, and got to her station; but the *Bel-*

lona, which came next, kept too close to this shoal on the starboard side, and she grounded. The Russell did the same thing.

“ We came next. Nelson saw the mistake, and that the ships had hugged the starboard shoal too close ; so we starboarded the helm a little, cleared the bank, and led the way for the rest. But there were three of the ships already hard and fast. We steered up to our station, being about half a cable from the enemy, and dropped our anchor from the stern : but, had the pilots known their duty, that action would have been fought in the St. Vincent and Nile fashion—yard-arm to yard-arm,—but those leather-headed fellows did not half like the close quarters, so we were obliged to make the best of it we could. But it was enough to make any man, and much more Nelson, who never could bear to see anything go wrong, swear like a trooper, to find that the Amazon, Captain Riou, and his small squadron of frigates, were obliged to fill up the gap occasioned by the three line-of-battle ships being aground. The Agamemnon was useless ;

the Bellona and Russell, although within shot, not half close enough; so that the frigates took up the vacant station against the Crown Battery: thus opposing that big battery, which three line-of-battle ships, besides the frigates, had been destined to attack.

“Now let’s see,” said I; “we have got it all right enough;—(Keep your paws out of the channel, you marine; you’re like a bear, wetting your paws first and sucking them afterwards;)—Here’s the artificial island.”

“I don’t understand how they can make islands,” said one of Jack’s messmates.

“Perhaps not,” said Jack; “but islands jump up and down like buckets in a well. Did you ever hear of Sabina Island?”

“Go on, Ben,” said the marines; “every man who has been in Mexico knows how to make islands.”

“We began to fire away at five minutes after ten; and by half-past eleven all hands were at it, thick and warm. The gun-brigs, which might have teased the Danes a little, were not at hand; the currents and the winds baffled

them. Of the whole number only one got into action ; and out of about half-a-dozen mortar vessels, only two could manage to get to their station on the middle ground, and blaze away at the arsenal over the mast-heads of both fleets.

“ As we went into action, Nelson saw how his squadron was weakened, and he walked quicker than usual ; but directly about a thousand guns opened upon us, we were all alive, and we went to work like Christians.

“ I was, as usual, placed to lend the signalman a hand ; and I had got one of the admiral’s old glasses under my arm. At first the smoke was so thick that I ought to have had a tube half a mile long to see clear of the dust ; but a breeze springing up, we were enabled to see Sir Hyde Parker’s division trying all he could to come to our assistance : but it was useless ; the wind was right against him, and the current also. Well, I took a look at our mast-heads ; and there was the signal—the signal for close action—flying. The flags blew out all

clear, and any man inclined to see it had only to look.

“ Well then, Jack, I takes my purser’s pump, for the glass was not much better ; and there I saw at Sir Hyde’s masthead, as plain as a pike-staff, No. 39. The signal-lieutenant called for the book, and I tumbled over the pages,—for, thinks I to myself, I have been at this trade for the last five-and-twenty years, and, bless me if ever I heard of No. 39 before ! ‘Thirty-nine!’ I kept saying to myself,—‘it must be something about sending a boat to communicate. Thirty-nine!’ said I ; ‘I’m blessed if this is not something to do with the old Agamemnon!’—for she repeated the signal. What do you think it was, Jack ?”

“ Can’t say, Ben,” he replied, as he puffed out a long line of smoke, which previous to this interruption he had been letting off like small guns from both broadsides of his mouth,—“ Can’t say. Whew !”

“ And curse me if I can see !” said Ben ; “ why, you make more smoke than a frigate on fire.”

“Avaust there, Ben, if you please!—don’t talk of it—it makes my eyes water.”

“And so it does mine. But guess, Jack?”

“Guess, Ben,—why, then, I suppose it was to splice the main-brace, or to pipe to dinner.”

“No.”

“Well, then, tell us.”

“You’d never guess it, not any mother’s son of you: such a signal to be made to Nelson! —It was ‘to discontinue the action!’”

“My eyes and limbs!” said Jack.

“Oh, humbug!” said the marine.

“So I thought. So says I to the lieutenant, ‘It’s some mistake, sir, or we have not seen the flags.’

“‘Thirty-nine,’ says the signal-man again, ‘or there’s no frogs in France!’

“‘What is it?’ said the lieutenant.

“‘Discontinue the action,’ said I, holding out the book; for I knew he wouldn’t believe me.

“‘None of your nonsense, sir,’ said he; ‘this is no time for joking. But, by heavens! it’s all right—thirty-nine, as plain as the nose on

the admiral's face. Let 's look again ;' and away he trudged, book and all, to the admiral, whilst I followed, with a face as long as a boarding-pike.

" ' What !' said Nelson, and he wagged the stump of his right arm as if it had got St. Vitus's dance, ' is the signal for close action up ?'

" ' Certainly, my lord,' says I.

" ' Ah, that 's right," said he, and I understood his look : ' keep it there ; do you hear ?'

" ' Ay, ay, sir !' said I.

" ' Here, give me the glass for a moment.'

" Well, he takes the glass, levels it at Sir Hyde's ship, claps his blind eye to it, and, with the gravest face in the world, turned round to Captain Foley, and said, ' I really do not see the signal. Do you hear ?' said he, ' nail mine for closer action to the mast !' and away he walked.

We afterwards heard that Sir Hyde Parker only made the signal in order that Nelson might retire, if, owing to the number of ships aground, he might find himself too weak.

" I never knew chaps fire faster or better than

those Danes. The action was gloriously maintained on both sides : but Riou, who saw the signal, and whose squadron was cut almost to pieces, obeyed it. He was killed as he hauled off. It is just as well he was killed, for he would have died of a broken heart had he come out safe. Never was there a finer fellow—no, not in the whole navy,—Nelson excepted.

“ Well, it was give and take for many a long hour ; and the *Monarch* got the most of the shot : she lost two hundred and ten men ; and the *Bellona*, from the bursting of her own guns, suffered very much. But on board of the old *Monarch*, those jolly fellows who were left picked up the pork which a good-natured shot let adrift from the coppers, and they fought and ate like so many mastiff-dogs. Only think, two hundred and ten men killed !—why, it’s more than any one ship in the navy lost during the whole of the war.

“ The Danes, as fast as men were killed or officers wounded, sent others from the shore ; and never was gallantry more displayed by any

nation under the sun. There was one young man, Mr. Villemois, got on a raft, with twenty-four guns, and a hundred and twenty men ; and somehow—for he had no mast—he contrived to get under the Elephant's stern, and he opened his fire. We could not get a gun to bear upon him, and he was amusing himself at our expense. I tried a stern-chaser ; but it went over and over him. This was no very pleasant business for us who were stationed on the poop ; for Mr. Villemois pointed his guns rather high, and one could not look over the stern to see what colour the water was, but smack came the shot popping at us, as if we were birds in September. Thinks I, my brave boys, I will give you something rather heavier than dough-boys to eat ; so I went to Captain Foley, and told him the liberties the young gentleman was taking with his cabin windows. He sent the marines on the poop, who, as they fired down upon the open platform of the raft, soon made considerable havoc amongst the Danes, and spoiled their sport a little. Nelson came and looked at her ; and after the action,

he took Villemois by the hand on the quarter-deck, and called him a brave defender of his country, and a gallant and excellent officer.

“About one o’clock the fire began to slacken a little, and by two it had nearly ceased along the whole line ; but whenever our boats went to take possession of the prizes, the Danes, either by mistake—for they never had such an affair as this before—or out of revenge, fired upon them ; even from their batteries on the island of Amak, and from the Trekroner, we received many shot after the line of ships and preams had struck. This occasioned a deal of bloodshed ; for many of the preams being dismasted, had got adrift and run foul of one another, so that the shot made great havoc. Nelson got irritated when he saw his boats fired upon, and he resolved to put a stop to such uncivil proceedings ; accordingly we hoisted a flag of truce, and Sir Frederick Thesiger was sent with it. But here I saw how great a man the admiral was upon great emergencies.

“I was sent for in the cabin to get a portfolio which I had stowed away when we cleared for

action. Lord Nelson sat down and wrote a letter to the Crown Prince; and as I saw how busy he was, and knew every turn of his mind as I thought, I placed some wafers ready. He folded his letter—ay, with one hand much quicker than the ship's-clerk would do with both,—and I held out the wafers. 'No,' said he with a smile; 'bring a light: this is no time to appear hurried or informal.'

"The first thing which occurred to the admiral was to avail himself of this flag of truce to remove the ships from out the narrow channel. Why, it's dried up, as I'm a sailor! Why, Jack, you wouldn't have the ships left here on the bank, and no water to float them out?"

"Avaust there, you marine!" said Jack: "why, you're eating the Agamemnon; and he's done more than Nelson, for he has demolished half the Danish fleet."

"And I'm a-thinking," said the marine, "that if the ships are gone, you can't want any more stuff to float them."

"Why, you lobster," said I; "here's the

Bellona hard and fast, and here's the Elephant, and the Ganges, the Glutton, and the Defiance, to get out. Besides, you have not heard the end of the story, and my tongue will get high and dry and come to an anchor for the night in my harbour's mouth, without you get a flood-tide to float it off."

"Well, here you are," said Jack; "but I'm blessed if this fighting ain't dry work."

"Ay, now then I can speak," I continued. "Our flag of truce was answered, and the batteries ceased firing: the signal was made to weigh in succession, and the Monarch, who first led us through the Sound, was now the leading ship out of this channel. She had to pass close to the Trekroner on the artificial island——"

"I dare say," interrupted the marine, "that was a place where fishermen dried their nets."

"One puff of wind and every stick would have gone over the side, for she was riddled. She struck upon a shoal; but the Ganges, which was close in her wake, struck her on the

broadside, as she rounded-to, (for the *Monarch* had only tailed upon the bank,) and pushed her off again.

“Our old ship the *Elephant* stuck hard and fast, and so did the *Defiance*; and there they remained for many hours. Had the Danes at that moment refused to treat, every one of our ships might have become prizes; for the approach of the *Ramillies* and *Defence*, from Sir Hyde’s division, could not have got the ships afloat, which were aground within point-blank shot of the *Trekroner*. This battery, owing to the want of ships to attack it, was almost uninjured, and at the close of the action had fifteen hundred fresh men to man the guns.

“It’s these little lucky events which lead to greatness. The Danes continued sending their Adjutant-general Lindholm to the *London*, which ship was at anchor four miles from the town; and the time it required to pull there, and there to consult,—for Nelson left the *Elephant* and went on board that ship to conduct the treaty,—gave us ample time to remove from

the scene of action. But the affair which hurt the gallant hero the most was the blowing up of the *Danbrog*. She had been drifting about in flames, and the crew could not extinguish the fire : in a moment not an atom remained of her ; and her brave crew, who had so gallantly fought, perished when the battle was over ; nor could we, although you may depend upon it we were not backward ‘to snatch a brave tar from a watery grave,’ succeed in saving any.

“ The big wigs settled that we were to have our prizes without further molestation ; and every man in the fleet was tired enough on Good Friday (the day after the action). We got the *Elephant* off during the night ; but Lord Nelson breakfasted on board of her,—he had slept in the *St. George* ; and at last we got all our prizes out clear of banks and shoals, batteries and Danes.

“ Then came the weariness which succeeds great exertion ; then it was that we forgot our victory in the remembrance of our heavy loss of shipmates. We all know the

feeling when we go into action—our hearts are alive to the honour and the glory of our country—hope cheers us on ; and although we feel the cold creep of uncertainty as to the result, yet we are animated by the prospect of glory, and of the pleasure of saying, ‘ That man was at Copenhagen ;’ but when it’s all over—when the rumble of the guns has ceased, and when the groans of the wounded succeed the bustle of an action,—then it is, Jack, that we know we have hearts, for they worry us sadly.

“ We lost in that battle no less than nine hundred and fifty-three men. The Danes, counting in their prisoners, mustered six thousand short of complement. Our prizes amounted to six line-of-battle ships and six preams. We only sent one, the Holstein, a sixty-four, to England ; the rest were burnt and sunk with all their guns on board : and we did not think that was the best way of disposing of them, for it gave us no prize-money ;—and, Jack, you know as well as myself, that prize-money is just as acceptable to us foremastmen, as

pensions and pay to others ;—and we did grumble, and so did Lord Nelson, at sinking ships which might have been in Portsmouth harbour in a week's time.

“ Another thing grieved my heart. You know that we have no burying-ground on board a ship ; and that most of us prefer a hammock, with a round-shot or two at the feet, to all the humbug of shore-going gentlemen, who hire others to cry for them, and who get a black box mounted on four wheels, with feathers and gimcracks, to carry them to the grave. With us it is a grating and a flag—one splash in the water, and the Lord have mercy on our souls ! But when the Danes buried their dead, they made a grand affair of it ; and of course it was a consolation to those who were left, to see that, had they died, they would have been buried decently.

“ I happened to be on shore with the admiral when the Danes buried their dead. It was the third day after the action : the whole city seemed to have assembled in the naval church-yard. Young women dressed in white

threw flowers over the graves ; thousands shed tears ; and I thought that a nation consulted its own dignity when it thus paid the last tribute to departed bravery. It makes a man feel that he does not die like a dog : it makes a soldier or a sailor conscious that others look on to write his name down in the log-book of memory ; and when he has run through this life in the service of his country, with a grateful remembrance for all the blessings he may have received, it is then, when the last *shroud* is placed over his mast-head, when he is hove down keel out, that those who moor him for ever in the narrow harbour of the grave, where there is no room required for swinging clear, say, ‘ There lies a man who faithfully served his king and his country ;’ and they lift their hands, when the clergyman says, ‘ ashes to ashes, dust to dust,’ and pray that he who behaved so well here may find an eternal repose there.”

CHAPTER V.

The arm that once, in firm affiance,
England's proud standard nobly bore,
Dishonour'd now, claims no alliance,
But, faithless, waves in vile defiance,
And dares to threat its native shore.

Sea Song.

I HAVE often turned in my mind the meaning of the words "luck in life;" and I am yet in doubt if fortune cannot be commanded; or if we are to wait for its coming, like a midshipman in the jolly-boat when the purser's steward is gone for fresh provisions, I fancy I might wait long enough before I should see Mrs. Fortune, or Mrs. Anybody else, coming to me and killing me with kindness. No, no; Fortune's steps are like a Jacob's ladder over the stern of a three-decker: your timid man may have his foot upon it, and fail; your bold man,

when once he clasps it, easily mounts. But yet there's many a man in the navy who is bold, daring, active, clever, and a seaman, and yet dies a half-pay lieutenant or a boatswain's mate; whilst some, who know very little about their profession, have had fathers parliament-men, and live to see their bunting at the main-top-gallant-mast head. But I suppose it is all as it should be; it all comes right enough at the end; for when the breath is out of our bodies, it signifies very little whether a man was an admiral or a Greenwich pensioner.

And yet it must be admitted, that all the reasoning in the world is but cold consolation, when we see an idle fellow lounging about with his hands in his pockets, doing nothing but mischief; and who is so preciously stingy, that he would see a sailor stumping about upon a pair of timber toes, and never give him enough to drink the King's health, or to buy corn-plaster. It may be all right, and I dare say it is; but what I mean to say is, that I don't understand *why* it should be so.

After the battle of Copenhagen, we remained

some time in the Baltic. Sir Hyde Parker was superseded, and Nelson continued to set matters to rights in those seas : but before he started, he gave me the longest pull I ever had. He got some information about the situation of Sir Hyde's fleet and the Swedish squadron ; and as the wind and current were against our getting out between the Islands of Amak and Saltholm, and most of our squadron touched and stuck fast, Nelson jumped into a boat, and away we pulled, from five o'clock in the evening until midnight, when we reached the Elephant ; and so much used had we become to pulling, that all night long, when we were asleep, we went through the motions.

It was on the 5th of May that Sir Hyde went home ; and Nelson was left in command. The Russians became civil ; the Swedes were mighty polite ; the Danes could not do anything, and therefore we did nothing in *our way*.

Not long afterwards, Sir Maurice Pole arrived to supersede Nelson ; and we came home

in a man-of-war brig to Yarmouth, as his lordship did not like to weaken the commander-in-chief's fleet. And I'll just mention a strange business, without any reference to the *Cape*. Nelson was as sick as a youngster who had never been at sea before: and I have heard, that since vessels went by grinding smoke, the oldest seamen alive have become sea-sick again.

It was about this time that Bonaparte was making great preparations at Boulogne to invade England; and every one remembers the precious fright all the old women were in for themselves and their daughters; and every old mother who wanted to scare her children for any misbehaviour, used to tell them that Bony was coming to take them; until, at last, it was dangerous to have a round face, for fear of being taken for the Frenchman. Nelson, of course, was looked to; and he had the command of the coast from Orfordness to Beachy Head, and as much of the French coast as came within those limits.

I had seen my little Jane, and she was grow-

ing up a beauty. Lady Hamilton had taken great care of her, and already she was employed more as a lady than as the daughter of a smuggler. She had been taught to play harpsichords, and, I understood, she spoke French, and wrote a tidy hand.

We could not remain long on shore, and Nelson's flag was soon flying on board the *Medusa*. We stood over to Boulogne, and sunk one or two floating-batteries, and destroyed a few gun-boats at anchor outside of the pier. There we saw the active preparations of the Corsican; and, I believe, he had some idea of coming to London, to see what it was like. But he was nothing of a sailor: he little knew that one frigate in a breeze of wind was nearly sufficient to sink all his gun-boats and rafts; and that, if he crossed in a calm, he must tow,—a thing rather against expedition.

Although we seamen laughed at the whole business, yet it was right to be prepared: and Nelson never left anything to chance. Besides which, all the old women were certain that the Frenchmen were coming; and the

country was in such a state of alarm, that Nelson thought he had better put an end to all doubts by an attack upon Boulogne; and accordingly the boats of the squadron, under Somerville, Parker, Cotgrave, Jones, and Conn, in five divisions, left the ships at midnight. It was a dark night, and I lost sight of them as soon as they left us: and there I stood watching for daybreak—which is early enough on the 15th of August; and when it came, I saw how the tide and half-tide, the darkness and the uncertainty, had separated them: for one division never arrived at all, and another never got into action until after daybreak; the rest were at it in the regular English style.

The French, who had been taught their weak points when the *Medusa* practised firing upon the gun-boats, now fortified every possible advantageous situation; and the boats were chained to the shore. Every boat was defended by long poles, headed with sharp iron, stuck out from their sides in every direction, like the spears in a sea-egg: you might as well have attacked a porcupine without gloves.

Besides this hedge of boarding-pikes, they had boarding-nettings triced up, and on board of each boat was a file of soldiers. The batteries protected them whilst the boats advanced; and the beach being lined with soldiers, our gallant fellows had to face difficulties not so easily surmounted.

No sooner did the Frenchmen in the batteries observe that our men had taken possession of one of their vessels, than they opened á fire upon her, not caring one straw for their own men. It was therefore impossible to bring out any of the vessels, for the fire became so hot directly the flag was down, that the difficulty of unhooking the boat was not to be overcome; and the boats ultimately returned, having lost one hundred and seventy-two men, without one vessel to show us a victory.

It happened that when one of the boats of Parker's division succeeded in getting on board one of these porcupines, the French made a more than usually obstinate resistance. They defended her manfully, and were cheered and encouraged by a stout-looking fellow, who

fought like a tigress in defending her cubs. At last, after many a wound given and received, the whole surrendered but the man who had gallantly stood foremost. He jumped overboard with his cutlass in his mouth, and endeavoured to gain the next vessel: but one of the boats belonging to the division was at that moment pulling between the enemy's line, and seeing the man, they hauled him on board. Although he fought like a devil first, to shake himself from the hook which the bowman had fixed in his jacket, in he was hauled at last; and he delivered himself of a cargo of curses in that beastly, snuffling, whistling language, which, instead of coming from the mouth of a man like our good, respectable, round oath, came as if he was forcing it out of his forehead, or driving it through his nose.

It happened that one of the men was wounded in the boat, and was placed underneath the thwarts, when this chap trod upon him, or somehow kicked his wounded leg. Jack distributed a volley of words for the French-

man's selection ; but either one of them would have been but poorly received in good company : and this seemed to hurt the prisoner more than his captivity, for he growled out in good English, " The devil take you !" Two of the men heard it ; and the officer of the boat immediately ordered him to be lashed, hands and feet, for there was not a doubt, from his good pronunciation, but that he was English. But although, when they were returning to the ship, he was frequently spoken to, yet he never had the gift of tongues again. He said he could not understand a word, and it was "*No comprendé.*" I told old Rattling, when he related me this, that, without being personal, he didn't understand the lingo ; for he must have said, "*Jenny comprende par ;*" which, as I was once very intimate with a Frenchman, I knew to be correct. " Thank you, Ben, for your learning," said he ; " maybe you're right ; for, do you mind, I did not hear him myself."

I was on board the Medusa, looking on at the fun ; but when it was reported that

an Englishman was taken prisoner, having been the most forward in the service of our enemies, Lord Nelson then ordered that he might be brought on board to pass round the fleet, to see if any one could know him. And if one thing was hated by our gallant admiral more than another, it was when an Englishman forgot himself so much, as to desert to an enemy, and that enemy a Frenchman. He used to tell his midshipmen, "You must hate a Frenchman as you do the devil."

Well, the prisoner was brought on board the *Medusa*. The men were mustered at divisions, and he was passed before every man in the ship. No one knew him. At last, after going from ship to ship, a man on board the *Gannet*, who was slightly wounded, happened to come on deck, and he roared out directly; "Why, that's Tackle! he was a shipmate of mine on board the *Glasgow*!" And when he was taken on board the *Isis*, he was claimed as a deserter from her.

This circumstance made a great noise in the squadron, and an order was given for a

court-martial to assemble on the 18th August, on board the *Medusa*, Captain Gore. The night previous to the trial, the prisoner was removed to us, and placed under the half-deck, with a sentinel to watch him, although he was in irons;—for irons, although pretty safe, are not quite sure.

Lord Nelson was at this time very fidgety about Captain Parker, who had been wounded in the leg, and was considered in great danger. I was sent about a hundred times with notes—for I was then in the capacity of admiral's servant, messenger-boy, and coxswain,—and if ever one brave man felt for another, it was when that Parker died. Lord Nelson did not get over that in a hurry.

I remember the 18th August well, the day which preceded the trial, for on that day we buried Mr. Gore and Mr. Bristow in one grave at Deal. At that funeral Lord Nelson himself, with eight captains, attended; and when the marines fired over them, that man—he was more than a man!—burst into tears, and felt for the youngsters as if they had been his sons.

It was the evening before the trial, and after the burial, that I came on board for something the admiral wanted, when I heard some of the men talking about the prisoner; and being curious,—at least I was, when I had a pair of eyes,—I sheered over the starboard side of the half-deck, and there I saw Tackle.

“ Ah !” said he ; “ what ! you come against me ?”—“ Not on one account,” said I, “ but as the murderer of my sister !” I was in a fury ; but the sentry interposed, and said he had orders that no one should speak to the prisoner. I ran to the cabin, got what I was sent for, and when landed, ran to the room in which Lord Nelson was seated.

“ What ’s the matter ?” said he, for he saw that something was the matter with me.

“ Oh, my lord,” I said, “ it ’s he ! it ’s he !”

“ *He !*” replied Nelson with great coolness.

“ What ! are you mad, or drunk ?”

I drew up ; I never was drunk or neglected my duty ; and Nelson, when he saw how worried I was at the words he had used, said, “ Never mind, Brace, what I said ; tell me what

is the matter, and rely upon it, if I can serve you I will."

"The deserter, my lord—" said I.

"Has he escaped?" said the admiral, as he jumped from his chair.

"I wish he had, my lord!" said I.

"Why?"

"He is the father of Jane, and the murderer of my sister!" Here I stopped, for I was a little overcome; and although I must say I felt all the satisfaction of revenge, and remembered the pretty lesson Tackle had taught me, yet, when I asked what I did ask, it was with no intention of killing him with kindness.

Nelson got up and walked about the room. It was near six in the evening, and he was waiting for his dinner: the left arm was at work, and he remained silent and thoughtful.

"What can be done, my lord?" I said.

"What would you have me do?" he replied. "Would you have me screen a murderer, a deserter to the French?—it is impossible! The order for the court-martial is given—he has been claimed by the Isis, and

the only way in which it is practicable to interfere is by handing him over to the civil power for the murder : then he will be hanged without redemption, whereas at the court-martial he might escape."

" Oh, my lord !" I said, " it is because he is the father of Jane that I would save him : but as a deserter—as a murderer, although he intended to have shot me and not her, I would hang him like any dog."

" Tell me the circumstance ;—Never mind the dinner — take it away for half an hour.—Now tell me *all*."

I told him all, from beginning to end, and the reason why I had concealed the truth before, for I did not wish my own niece to be known as the daughter of shame.

" It is the feeling of a man—of an English sailor," said his lordship ; " and when I have said that, I can say no more. To save him is impossible, even if I felt inclined ; but a man who has been a smuggler, a murderer, a seducer, a deserter, most richly deserves the fate which the court will award him. I will

write this evening to Lady Hamilton, to send Jane down instantly at my own expense; and you must make up your mind, to await the sentence of the court. Perhaps, however, you may wish to see him: here is an order to Captain Gore, to allow you to remain with him as long as you like, and to remove the sentry from within hearing."

He wrote the order, and as he gave it me, he said, "I can do no more; he must abide the consequences of his own indiscretion. Go, if you like; I shall not require you to-night. And here," said he, as I was going away, "here is a note to Gore, or the commanding officer, to allow you my boat, and not to question you."

I could not thank him, although I attempted to stammer out some words. "Never mind, I see what you would say," his lordship said: "you have a hard duty to do, but you will do it like a sailor and a Christian." I shut the door, and stood bewildered how to act: at last, I resolved to go on board, to tell Tackle how matters stood, and to urge him to repentance before it was too late.

Captain Gore was not on board, but the first-lieutenant opened the notes, and, accordingly, the sentry was removed, and I was told that now the prisoner would be considered under my care, until I called the marine, who was removed to the other side of the deck.

My eyes! no one can tell how I felt! I went down the main hatchway all of a tremor, like a youngster going to bathe on a cold morning; whilst half the ship's company watched me, and wondered what I could be after. I drew the screen aside, and there was Tackle, sitting on a sail-maker's bench, with both legs in irons: his head was hanging down, and he appeared in deep thought. I did not disturb his meditations; for perhaps he was summing up his long career of crime, or in silent prayer, or looking back on scenes of pleasure, or in the remembrance of some happy hour of his youth. In about five minutes, during which time it was evident his thoughts were far away, he remained in the same position; only he clasped his hands tighter together, and now and then groaned as if his heart was broken. He looked

up in my face, and jumped instantly on his legs ; the irons reminded him of his situation, and he sat down with a look of resignation, as much as to say, “ What brings you here but to torture me ? ”

“ Tackle,” said I, “ as far as a man can forgive a sister’s murder, I have forgiven you ; as much as a sailor can forget the hatred you bore me and mine, and the misery you brought upon the old and young, so much have I forgotten : but now your last hour is drawing near ; to-morrow will see you a prisoner at the court for desertion, for being taken in arms against your King and Lord Nelson ; and you must remember the Article of War beginning, ‘ If any person in or belonging to the fleet shall desert, or entice others so to do—’ I will not go on.”

“ No ! ” said he, as his rough voice came on my ear, “ I would rather you did not ; and if you made yourself scarce upon this occasion, I should like you the better, if possible. This is no part of my punishment, and I might have been spared this nonsense.”

“Nonsense!” said I. “Tackle, three days from this you will be swinging from the fore-yard-arm: I have spoken to Lord Nelson to save you, but he cannot—he dare not!”

“What, Brace!” said Tackle, “I see you have profited by my instructions on board the *Nancy*, that there was no revenge like killing a man with kindness. Now, if I could only shake myself out of these cursed bilboes, I would very soon see which was the better man of the two: your room is better than your company;—and there,” said he, as he spat upon me,—“there is for your kindness! I would rather dance upon nothing, than live indebted to you for my life.”

I was rather hurt at this; but I kept up my temper, and continued,—“Tackle! why do you continue in this useless manner? Would you go to hell without one man to pray for you? Is this the way to treat one who came to comfort you,—to spit upon him? Tackle, no one overhears us: I tell you, three days from this, and the morning breeze will blow upon your corpse.—Your daughter is yet alive!” He darted upright as if he had been struck through

the heart by a musket-ball, and looked me full in the face.

“She’s dead, Brace, and you know it!”

“She’s alive,” said I, “and will be here to-morrow night! No one can mistake her—the mark is on her forehead. Think, Tackle, what she will feel, when the first time she knows her father it will be when he is sentenced to die!”

“Jane!” he said.

“Is dead—you shot her! Her father died that night.”

“I know it all,” he said, “for Jacob told the truth. Now, if I could ask a man I hate so much as yourself a favour, it would be to bring me my daughter before I die.”

“It would be better,” said I, “that she never knew her father; and then the guilt of her parent and the shame of her birth would be spared her for ever.”

“You devil out of hell!” said the enraged Tackle; “is it thus you would raise a hope, to crush it instantly? Is it thus, when the cup of bitterness is full, you add the only drop to make it overflow?—But stop, Brace—don’t go:

tell me, shall I see Jane? Why, I could almost kneel to you if you would say yes."

"To-morrow you shall see her."

"And to-morrow I shall be tried, condemned—the rope will be about my neck when I am made a father! I won't see her.—But, Brace, I'm yet well to do in the world—all I have got is yours if you will help me to escape. You would not see your own brother-in-law hung? Have you no feeling of pride left for little Jane? Would you have her scoffed at, as the child of a man executed at the fore-yard-arm? Think of this, and listen to me;—my escape will save all this; my daughter would not be a blot to point at!"

"It's very bad," I replied,—“very; but if I had the will, I have not the power;” and I pointed to the irons; he shook them with rage.

"If you had the will!—Then, d—n you! it is my death you want. Go! I hate you, despise you, abhor you!—yes, now, as much as ever!"

"You will die, then, without forgiving me, and without seeing your daughter? Good

night!—And yet for her,” said I, “for her sake I would ——”

“Stop, stop!” said Tackle; “don’t leave me. Can you do nothing for me? Think of Jane!”

“Nothing! nothing! I fear, nothing! But this I can promise, that I will see you to-morrow; and to-morrow evening you shall see your daughter. I must not wait.”

I held out my hand; he held it firmly in his grasp—it was like the nip of a vice: his little red eyes were fixed upon me as he said,

“I will die like a man, and like a Christian.”

“I hope so, Tackle,” I added.

“I will, Brace. God bless you!—mind you bring me my daughter, and perhaps I may yet live. You shake your head. Is there no hope?—what, none?—must I hang?” And as he said this, he fixed his eyes upon me with such a look, that even I trembled.

“Good night, Tackle!” I said, as I looked what I believed: “say your prayers; and I hope God may forgive you, as I have now done.”

He loosened his grasp: I ran my sleeve across my face; and as I passed over the

other side, I told the sentry to take charge again of his prisoner.

It was now eight o'clock, and I was anxious to leave the ship, for I was rather a stranger on board of her: the first-lieutenant ordered a boat to be manned, and I was landed.

CHAPTER VI.

The charge is prepared,
The judges all ranged (a terrible show !)
Beggars' Opera.

Then, bowing to the chaplain, who had scarcely recovered from the effects that the scene had produced upon him, and looking significantly at the provost-marshal, Peters bent his steps forward by the gangway—the noose was fastened—the gun fired—and in a moment, all was over.

CAPT. MARRYAT'S *King's Own*.

I REMEMBER the dawn of the 19th August 1801 as well as if it had been yesterday, and better ; for somehow the old scenes of my life are fresh in my memory, whilst those which occurred only an hour ago are forgotten. And I don't much fancy this cloud, which seems getting thicker and thicker over my recollection : it's a jog from the sharp elbow of that old skeleton fellow that carries the hour-glass, and sometimes forgets to turn it.

The morning broke beautifully ; there was not a cloud to be seen ; and the shingles on Deal beach were not moved by the sea as it silently washed them. The admiral was at the Three Kings, and his room looked over the Downs. I was there arranging his papers, when a gun from the Medusa shook the windows. I cast my eyes that way, and there was the Union Jack flying,—the signal for a court-martial. Ah ! I knew what must be the result, and I was resolved to see how a man who had committed such crimes would face his judges.

Lord Nelson came down about a minute after, and he saw in a second all that was passing in my mind. He sat down and wrote a letter to Captain Gore, which he desired me to take on board before the court assembled ; for he was too good an officer to have any communication with any of the captains after nine o'clock, when they were trying the prisoner.

“ You need not return unless you wish it,” said he ; “ and when little Jane arrives, I will take good care of her until you come back. Did you see *him* last night ?”

I told his lordship all that had happened ; but he never added a word : so I withdrew, and got on board about five minutes before the court was formed.

“ You know this fellow, Brace ? ” said Captain Gore as he read the letter.

“ Yes, sir,” said I.

“ You can see him now if you like, or after the trial.—Send the sergeant of marines aft.—Oh! youngster ; tell the marine officer and the provost-marshal I want them.”

I walked away, and the captain gave orders to that effect. I went under the half-deck. Tackle was dressed as a seaman, and he looked calm and collected ; although, when he saw me his face became redder, and he seemed willing to avoid me. As he passed, I said, “ Be a man now, Tackle ! ” He nodded his head and gave me his hand. I followed him into the captain’s cabin, where a table had been placed fore and aft, at which were seated five captains. Tackle was placed on the left-hand side of the judge-advocate, the provost-marshal being on Tackle’s left with a sword drawn.

The order for the assembling of the court, the letter from the captain of the *Isis* requesting a court-martial, and the other requisite papers, were read ; when the captains all stood up and swore a solemn oath to administer justice to the best of their power and belief, and they called on God to witness their assertion. I thought it was a solemn vow. It was the second court-martial I had ever attended : one when the foreign Prince was tried on board the *Foudroyant*,—he was hung on board the *Minerva*, a Sicilian frigate, that same evening,—and this one of Tackle's.

I paid the greatest attention to the whole proceedings, and kept an account of the questions, the witnesses, and their answers. The first man who was called was William Macpherson : his evidence went to prove this point, that Tackle was the man who defended the French gun-boat so fiercely, that he himself had received a slight wound in endeavouring to make him a prisoner ; that he saw him jump overboard ; and that he could solemnly swear that the prisoner was the man.

“ Prisoner,” said the president, “ have you any question to ask this witness ?”

“ Did you ever see me before ?” asked Tackle.

“ Not to my recollection,” said the witness.

“ Then I would not give much for your memory,” said Tackle with a sneer : “ I wish you had been burnt in the Glasgow !”

I looked steadfastly at the witness, and there sure enough was old Tom, my old Agamemnon messmate ; but how he had shipped a purser’s name I did not then know. But no man does that unless he has deserted, or been left on shore, having broken his leave and *run* upon the books. Thinks I, this is the world all over, one deserter giving evidence to hang another !

The next witness was the man who picked him up. And then the captain’s clerk of the *Isis* was sworn : he produced the ship’s book ; showed his entry on board of her as Richard Rawlings ; swore to the prisoner as the man, and showed the R against his name six months previous to the trial, when the *Isis* was off Guernsey, and before she joined the fleet to act

against Copenhagen. Another man, Thompson, a quartermaster, swore to the person of Tackle, that he was his messmate, and that he deserted in February. Here the case closed against him.

“Now, prisoner,” said the president, “we are ready to hear anything you may have to say in your defence; the judge-advocate will give you his assistance, and we will adjourn the court for any reasonable time you may require.”

Tackle looked round like a bewildered man, and I thought he was going to act Bedlam; but he recovered himself in a moment, and he spoke nearly these words. I always said that he was a scholar, and a man who had not only been well educated, but had been in much better company than ever he deserved. He thanked the court for their kindness; but he refused any assistance, and was ready to begin directly.

The president said, “We are ready, prisoner; but I think it right to caution you, that after you have begun, it will be too late to alter

your mind ; and that the judge-advocate, who is accustomed to aid unfortunate persons in your situation, will lend you the assistance of his powerful talent, in order, if possible, to save you from your present predicament."

"That sounds like a broad hint," said one of the men not a mile from me, "that the members of the court have made up their minds."

"Made up their minds?" said another; "ay, long afore that: it is a fine day, and they want to be off on shore."

"No," said I, in a low tone of voice; "it is much the fashion to say that justice is never done to a sailor if his captain tries him; but I don't know how it is possible to swear so solemn an oath, and yet neglect the case. But, of course, it is not much in a man's favour being tried by captains,—especially his own captain, who had already found him guilty before he wrote for the court-martial."

Tackle began. "Gentlemen of this honourable court, — It would, I know, be the height of imprudence in me, after the evidence which has been brought before you, to stand forward

and say ‘I am not guilty ;’ for here around me I see many of my old messmates and shipmates ; — one who has known me twenty years since as a seaman on board the Glasgow ; and one who has known me under other circumstances, which, thank God ! are beyond the jurisdiction of this court.”—That was a hint for me. —“ Gentlemen, I feel an inward satisfaction in now confessing my guilt : the apprehension of death,—and I know it awaits me,—is banished from my mind ; for death alone can relieve me from my sufferings. I need not enter at large upon my reasons for having deserted — there is one in this court who knows that I always was a stranger to fear : and it was not the rumours of the probable action at Copenhagen which prompted me to take that step ; it was a wish to return to my wife and family at Guernsey, and once more try my fortune in that line which had some years previously placed me in independence.

“ I did desert, and I returned to my wife. But short was the prospect of probable concealment : the hounds of justice were in pursuit of

me; I knew I was traced and tracked. I had but one course to take: I kissed my wife and children for the last time,—I tore myself from the firm embrace of the one, and the affectionate cling of the others;—I stole a boat, and in that boat, in the middle of the night, made sail for France. I offered my assistance to our enemies, and in doing my duty by them fell into the hands of those who now act as my judges. I am guilty, I do not deny it; but this I deny—your power to judge me.” (All the members of the court looked at him.) “Yes, gentlemen of this honourable court, I deny your power to judge me. A coroner’s writ for murder is out against me: there stands the witness against me; he saw me murder his own sister; and I call upon you to deliver me to the civil power, for you have no jurisdiction over me.”

Here Tackle ceased: the eyes of all the court were turned upon me, and I felt quite unmanned from their scrutiny.

“Clear the court!” said the president; and in a moment we were all turned out of the

cabin. The prisoner was conveyed below; and dismal was the time before the word was passed along the deck that "the court was reopened." In a minute the cabin was crammed; and never do I remember to have seen more eagerness to catch a sight of a poor devil than was manifested on this occasion. At length the shuffling of shoes subsided, and the president addressed Tackle.

"Prisoner," said he, "the court have considered the objections you have offered; and it is the opinion of the members that the objection should have been made previously to the examination of any witnesses against you; that now it is too late; and they therefore overrule it. You will continue your defence: the objection you have raised will be transmitted, with the notes of the court-martial, to the commander-in-chief, and through him to the proper authorities elsewhere. We are ready to hear you."

"It was but the drowning man catching at a straw," said Tackle. "My death, I knew, was certain; but I was willing to prolong my

miserable existence, although I dread to live. I know what your sentence must be ; and I have only one duty to perform to man before I am in the presence of another tribunal. It is to acknowledge my guilt to him ;" (here he pointed at me ;)
" to thank him for his exertions in my behalf with his lordship ; and to declare most solemnly that I never intended to murder either him or his sister, but merely to effect my escape, by either wounding or frightening him. I do not throw myself upon the mercy of the court, for that, I know, would be unavailing : I call upon you as men to do your duty to your king, your country, and your consciences."

Never, I suppose, was there greater astonishment, than when a man dressed as a common sailor spoke as he did. There was no moving about, first on one leg and then on the other ; no stretching out one hand to take it back again ; but he stood as firm as a rock, and he never faltered or stammered.

I remember it well : every man hated him like poison before ; but when he finished, every true heart along the decks felt for him. His

red eyes never had a drop in them to put out their fire; and he looked as if it was pleasant to be hung up at the fore-yard-arm, like a scrubbed hammock to dry.

It was not more than half an hour before the doors were opened again, and we were admitted. The captains had all put on their cocked-hats; and not one of them looked up. Any man could see that they had placed their signatures to the order of death, and that they felt like men for the poor creature who was so shortly to be seen at the place of execution. They had done their duty, as Tackle had desired them; but they could not divest themselves of the unpleasant feeling which accompanies such an awful responsibility.—“Silence in the court!” It was as still as if no human being breathed. The judge-advocate began:

“At a court-martial assembled on board of his Majesty’s ship *Medusa*,” and so on—we all know the form. Then came the list of the members; and then, that they had duly and considerately examined the evidence, and so forth; that the prisoner was guilty, and the

sentence of the court was, "That he should be hanged by the neck at the fore-yard-arm of his Majesty's ship the *Isis*, on such day as the commander-in-chief should think fit to direct."

Tackle never moved a muscle, although hardly one man looked from the deck to examine his features. A dead silence of a moment followed; when the president, seeing that Tackle did not intend to address the court, rose and said, "This court is dissolved. Provost-marshal, there is your prisoner!" The captains rose, and the court was cleared.

It is odd how such a sentence operates on the crew: it was like the feeling when a man has tumbled overboard and been drowned. A silence was observed quite awful, and the men spoke in whispers: you might have led them all like so many sheep. The 'piping the side,' as the different captains left the ship, made a break in the stillness; but they all looked as if one of them was no more.

I asked the captain to allow me to see the prisoner; and an order was given that at any time I might see him, although now the provost-mar-

shal never suffered him to be out of his sight. I went to him : he was as tranquil as a sheep before the butcher kills it. He held out his hand and said, " It's all over now, Brace ; the execution is nothing ; but I have something to tell you. I know we cannot be alone now, and I should have told you before, but I thought that the objection might have been a good one, and then I should have lived a week longer. You heard me mention my wife and children ?—they live at Guernsey," and he mentioned their abode. " Mind, Brace, you do not write to them until after I am gone ;—it would break Mary's heart and unman mine if we met. They are provided for. But for the one—for Jane's child—I cannot provide : let me see her when she arrives. She does not know me as the murderer of her mother, Brace ?"

I told him " No."

" Then I can master my feelings. Forgive me, Brace :—Do you from your heart ?"

I said, " I do."

" Then be my friend from this time to my death ; see me every day, and let me appear

before my God with your forgiveness stamped upon my brow, for I have done you more injury than any other man alive. Here is the clergyman coming : good-b'ye, Brace ! but bring me Jane : good-b'ye !”

I came on shore. Lord Nelson knew the result : the whole account, with the minutes of the court, was forwarded ; and the objection was overruled there, as it had been on board the Medusa.

Day after day I visited Tackle. The man was so altered, that his worst enemy would have forgiven him. His conversation was entirely about his hopes hereafter ; and he prayed regularly with the chaplain, who constantly attended upon him. Jane arrived the very day that the order for execution was issued to take place. It was the 26th of August which was to finish the career of crime of Tackle : the order was given on the 22nd.

Lord Nelson desired Jane to sit down, and he told me to leave them alone for a little time. She was then about ten years old, as beautiful as a sloop ; was dressed as fine as a quality

lady ; her dark blue eyes were as clear as the water about Bermuda, and I never saw such a pretty little angel in my life.

His lordship told her that she was sent for to see an unfortunate man who was ordered for execution, and who knew her mother very intimately : that he had expressed a great wish to see her before he died ; and he hoped that Jane would be prepared to be very kind to the poor man. He then asked her if she remembered her father. But Jane knew no other father than myself ; she was an infant when Tackle deserted her mother. Nelson caressed the poor little girl, and by degrees assured her that I was only her uncle, and that she was sent for at her father's urgent request, who was alive *now*.

The child ran to me, calling me her father, and hoping I would never leave her. She clasped me round the neck, and asked if her new father was going to take her away with him. I would rather have fought a regiment of Frenchmen on horseback than have gone through that scene. The dear thing wound

her arms round me, and said she wanted no other father but me,—no other mother than Lady Hamilton. That lady had made a daughter of Jane: she had been taught writing, reading, and music.

Well, the time was come that I was to take her on board; and an hour before this the chaplain had told Tackle that all hopes were over on this side the grave, and that the order had arrived for his execution on the morning of the 26th. He exhorted him to consider the awful situation in which he was placed, and no longer to cling to hope, for that was past, but to devote himself to God.

Tackle was cleanly dressed, for in that he was somewhat particular; and before I brought Jane to him, I told him she was aboard, and that, perhaps, as the child only thought she was brought to see the ship, Tackle had better not give her to understand that he was her father at first, but make a kind of acquaintance with her. Tackle agreed, and said, "I can manage myself, Brace. The worst is past; and this meeting will finish my suffer-

ings. I have been speaking to the master-at-arms, and he has told me that on the 26th the pain will be momentary : and this I know, for I have seen dozens hanged in former days, that the struggle is never more than a minute at most. I bore more than a minute's pain when you stabbed me and Jane died ; and then I never spoke."

I went upon deck, where the first-lieutenant was showing Jane the guns and the ropes, and walking her about for the admiration of everybody. Somehow the story had got wind, and every one of the crew came to have a look at Tackle's daughter ; and they felt like men for him who was shortly to part from one so young and so lovely.

I took Jane by the hand and led her round the fore-castle ; and I don't know what the child thought, but she heard nothing else but, "Poor pretty soul ! how I do pity her !" — Once she asked me if I was going to part with her, for all the strange men seemed to pity her. I took her down the after-ladder, for the first-lieutenant gave me leave, and she was now

upon the main deck, the larboard side, of the Medusa; for Tackle had not been removed on board the Isis. Only a slight canvass screen hid her from her father; and he, shackled on both legs, heard his daughter asking questions about the fire-buckets, and the handspikes, and the hour-glass, and the pumps. He did not dare move, because he thought the noise of the irons might startle his child; and he had covered his legs, irons and all, with a flag, so that the little girl should not see him as a prisoner. The sentry told me that never since his born days had he ever seen a man in such a state; and when the girl came round on the starboard side, Tackle got as white as a Norway crow in winter.

Well, I drew the screen on one side, and there he was! His red ferret's eyes were fixed upon the child; but there was a look of such fondness in them, that Jane seemed to like him at once. It is an odd feeling, but I have felt it myself: children know men who love them; and although such a man may be as ugly as the figure-head of the Neptune, and as fierce-look-

ing as the sign of the Saracen's Head, yet I am blessed if a child who would have screamed at a highwayman, would not run into his arms and kiss his jowl.

"Come, *come* to me," said Tackle, as he stretched his eager arms, and raised himself upon his feet without shaking the irons. Jane ran to him, and he kissed her, and kissed her, and cried like a baby; whilst Jane kept saying, "Why do you cry, sir,—why do you cry?" The sentry turned away, and put the point of his bayonet against the gun-carriage, turning it round and round in his hand as if he was drilling a hole; and I nearly twisted the black ribbon off my straw hat as I twirled it about, and shoved the skull-thatcher from one hand to another. Tackle had got hold of both the child's hands, and was reading every feature of her face; and the child returned the look.

"Ay," said he after a pause, "every look the same as her poor mother's! There are her eyes, and this little rosy pouting lip like Jane's; ay, and I fancy her form and figure the same. Do you like me, Jane?"

The girl answered, "Yes, indeed I do."

"This," continued Tackle, "is ten times worse than the most cruel of deaths! Now would I wish to live, Brace!" said he. I looked round; and he pointed to the child, and then felt his neck. I knew what he meant; he might have talked for an hour without saying so much. He could not have held out much longer; so I took Jane by the hand to lead her away.

"Stay awhile, Brace," said he; "stay awhile;—why, you have not been a minute, and I cannot part with her. Come, my child, once more, and kiss your own——" He stopped; but the child, in approaching him, trod upon the irons, the flag was removed in a minute, and Jane, young as she was, knew that the man before her was a prisoner.

"You are the man," she said, "Lord Nelson spoke to me about; and they are going to kill you. Oh! father, father!" said she, as she grasped my hand, "can't you save him! can't you save him!"

"I am your father!" said Tackle; and he

fell back upon the seat which was placed against the gun.

The child seemed quite bewildered ; and it was some time before I could get her away, and place her in the boat which conveyed her on shore. There was not a man on board the ship that did not feel for Tackle ; and somehow I had so forgiven him, that I felt as if my heart had got out of its place ; and if at that moment I could have saved him, I am certain I should have done it.

The next day we visited him. It was a cruelty to the child, but a consolation to the condemned parent. Tackle would set her on his knee and play with her hair, whilst every now and then a tear would escape, and drop like the large drops of rain before the thunder-storm : they came one by one, and his resolution alone overcame the regular burst. Tackle always talked to the child about her future behaviour in life ; to look to me as her parent, and to be grateful to Lord Nelson and Lady Hamilton for their kindness. He warned her of the danger of neglecting God ; and many

a man who wears long tails to his coat might have received instruction from the last words of Tackle.

Too soon the morning of the 26th came. The execution was to take place at eight o'clock ; and I had been on board late the night previously, begging Tackle not to see his child again. But it was useless. "Would you rob me," said he, "of the only comfort left in this world? And what is to follow after the yard-arm," he continued, with a face of such dark misgivings, "no one can tell."

"You have paid attention to the clergyman," said I, "and he has made you feel lighter."

"He has done his duty by me, and he has taught me not to fear death. I'll die, Brace, like a sailor. I'll not stagger to the forecastle like a drunken man ; I'll walk firm, erect, straight. You have known the worst of me, and have made me feel the more by your generous forgiveness. The brave man never harbours revenge when his enemy is down ; it is only the coward who exults."

When I said "Good night," he caught me

by the arm. "It is the last 'good night' I shall ever hear from your voice. Think, Brace, what it is to be cut short in the prime of life and vigour of health! No man has less desire to live than I have;—yet, to-morrow by five minutes after eight I shall be a corpse! It is now nine o'clock; eleven short hours more, and my race will be run! It's hard—very hard to die; but come it must, and I shall only be a few short years before my natural time. Good night, Brace," said he; "and mind you bring me Jane by six o'clock. But—stop; you'll be a father to her when I am gone—you'll protect her? Oh! my God, my God! no pain can equal this parting;—but bring her."

By that hour on the morning of the 26th we were on board. Jane was dressed in black, and she was quite sensible of the awful situation in which her father was placed. She had become very much attached to him, and frequently Tackle would make her kneel down and pray for him; "For," said he, "if the voice of innocence and the prayer of youth can prevail, hers will not be in vain."

Tackle had been removed to the Isis about half an hour after I had left him the night previously, and I found him in a screen-berth the starboard side of the main deck. He was cleanly dressed; the irons had been removed, and he was once more at liberty before his death. He started back with horror when he saw his child dressed in deep mourning. Poor little Jane had cried bitterly; and, although at that tender age, she had been made sensible that the last moment of her parent was near at hand.

“This is horrible!” Tackle commenced, “and I was prepared for all but this. I know I shall hear my own funeral service read—I shall hear the tolling of my own death-bell—I shall see almost my own execution, and yet I little expected to see my daughter in mourning for her father. Come, Jane, my own forsaken darling, come to me for the short hour which is left of life! And, Brace, kneel with us. I cannot die like the vagabond I have lived. The end is too close to look back, and I would rather look forward; what is done cannot be undone: and yet last night I dreamt of Jane,

as if she forgave me ; and I saw her, Brace, the blood running down her dress —I saw her as she knelt to hold your arm, you remember —and I thought I heard her say, ‘ Come, I’ll forgive—I’ll love you !’—Kneel ; the minutes go quickly, and already five bells* have struck.”

Tackle opened the book ; Jane knelt by his side, and I turned towards the port. He read the prayers out loud with a firm voice, which was only interrupted by the sobs of little Jane. Even the sentinel knelt down ; and we were thus employed when the chaplain arrived. Without saying a word, he knelt and began to read the Psalms. Six bells struck before we had done. The chaplain then left us for half an hour. During this time Tackle spoke much of his wife : he had drawn up a confession of the whole business relative to the smuggling, and he wrote a last parting letter to his wife ; he wept bitterly as he wrote this, whilst Jane was kneeling at his feet and looking at his face.—“ And now, Brace,” said he, “ if I have wronged you in life, I will serve you in death.

* Half-past six.

Take this paper—But stop, I will seal it,” and he borrowed the chaplain’s seal, which had two letters upon it under a crest; and when he had finished, he whispered in my ear as the chaplain drew back and the sentry stood at the farthest part of the screen, “When I am dead and gone, take this to Tapes, of Exeter; tell him from me, that I gave it to you when my last hour had commenced, and when men write the truth. But, Ben, as you would serve a dying man, never read it yourself—never let even your curiosity tempt you to look at one word of it; I would have it for ever rest in forgetfulness; but it is the only way I can serve you now. If Tapes does not assist you when you most need it, show him this.—If he refuses what you may honestly ask, tell him of *this*,” and he put his hand to his neck, “and that he will not be long after me. This paper shall be of good service to you, Ben, or I mistake the man to whom I tell you to show the outside. You understand me, Ben?”

“I do,” said I, as I took the packet.

“ You will not read it, Ben ; I would not have you think worse of me than now.”

“ Never, Tackle.”

“ Except,” he continued, “ Tapes refuses what I know you will never ask unless pressed by necessity or borne down by infirmity. There, take it, and may it repay you for some of your kindness to one who has so seriously injured you.”

At seven bells we began to see through the port signs of the approaching execution : we heard the marines on deck under arms standing right over us ; we saw the boats from the different ships putting off and drawing up on our starboard side, and Tackle looked at the solemn preparation unmoved.

The chaplain came and called Tackle’s attention to the fast-flying moments of life ; he urged him again and again to prayer ; but Tackle said, “ Sir, I have made my peace with God, and I must now wind myself up to act as a man. But, sir,” and he took him aside—it was about Jane—he then thought of the

parting. He had made me promise to walk with him to the forecastle, and who was to take charge of the child? The chaplain was to walk before him, I by his side;—and Jane! I proposed, and so did the chaplain, to send her on shore; but Tackle said he would not lose her—not until the last minute.

In the mean time the hands had been turned up, and the bustle of the ship announced that the time was growing towards a close. The boats had now mustered strong, and many people from the shore came off to see the execution. Tackle's character had gone before him, and those whose curiosity led them to witness this scene felt no pity for the sufferer, for they regarded him as a murderer—as a deserter to the French; and at that time in England such a character was most thoroughly despised.

The chaplain went on deck, and shortly afterwards returned with a midshipman, who was instructed to take Jane into the captain's cabin directly the parting was over.

The provost-marshal soon came; and now

the last sand in the glass had nearly run out. The marine officer came ; the time had expired ; Tackle was summoned. He was then with his arms wound round his child kissing her. He heard them not ; but the touch soon awakened him from his stupor ;—he looked at her for a second, he kissed her fondly, and presented her to the chaplain. The midshipman stepped forward and took her hand ; and when Tackle rose to follow the officer, the child broke from the midshipman and entwined its little arms round Tackle. I thought I should have dropped. It was now requisite to separate them ; but I would not have touched either—no, not for the universal world. What ! tear the daughter from the father, and he about to die ? Tackle was too much overcome ; and the chaplain, who was a father himself, was unmanned by the sight ; — he urged Tackle to collect his courage for the last desperate struggle of feeling.

The bell struck eight : the prisoner knew his last moment was come, for directly afterwards the death-toll began. He heard the bell repeat

its dismal knell, and tried to separate himself, but the child clung to him the closer. At last, turning rather suddenly as the thought struck him, he said to me, "Brace, what would Jane have thought if she had been told that thus *her* child would cling to *her* murderer?"

Jane fell back at the words, and Tackle walked to his execution. We came up the after-ladder: I looked and saw the rope there before our eyes,—from the fore-yard-arm it came upon the forecastle; the men were at divisions, the marines under arms, the officers present.

The bell was stopped and the sentence read. Not a sound was to be heard as the captain returned the paper, and the order for the execution, to his clerk, until his voice again ordered the bell to be tolled. A party of the marines, with their arms reversed, headed by the drummer with his drum muffled, moved from the capstan; then the chaplain walked, reading the burial service; and then came Tackle and myself, the provost-marshal on one side and the master-at-arms on the other.

The men all bowed as we passed ; and I cannot describe the horrid cold shudder which came over me. There was I hand-in-hand with my own sister's murderer, and he going to pay the forfeit of his crime ; the death-bell slowly tolling, the chaplain praying for his soul ; whilst before us was the platform—the executioner—the rope !

The gunner, with the lighted match ready to give the last signal, stood in waiting ; and at each step Tackle's grasp became tighter. He walked, as he had said, firm, and without faltering ; but when he ascended the platform, and I shook his hand for the last time, his voice failed him when he said, “ My daughter, Brace,—my daughter ! ” The rope was placed round his neck,—his hands were fastened behind him,—the shot were affixed to his heels,—the chaplain had withdrawn,—the men in the waist who were to run him up stood in preparation ; when a loud scream was heard—the child had broken from the grasp of the midshipman, and, rushing on deck, she saw her father with the rope round his neck. At a

glance she knew that death was to follow : she screamed and would have run forward ; when, to prevent this last affecting scene—for, the cap not being drawn over his face, Tackle saw her, and leant forward, saying, “ My daughter ! my daughter ! ” — we heard the word “ Fire the gun ! ” A volume of smoke followed the order ; and when the light air of wind had cleared away the last record of Tackle’s life, Jane saw her father a corpse, swinging from the fore-yard-arm ! She fell back and fainted.

Tackle died as he had said, “ turning a black face on the world.” When they ran him up, the toggle of course caught in the block : his body nearly touched the fore-yard ; then falling about eight feet, until the rope taughthened, his neck was broken by the jerk, and he never moved a limb ; but his face grew dreadfully dark. Amidst all the horrors of a seaman’s life, I never remember to have seen the equal of this.

I have seen men shattered by shot ; I have stood by my messmates as the madness

of yellow fever came over them ; I have heard men rave, and seen them endeavour to tear themselves to pieces ; but I never saw such a sight as Tackle's death before ; and I wish I could drive it out of my mind,—but I shall never forget that scene—never, never !

I ran aft, and caught Jane in my arms ; the surgeon had placed her flat on the deck, and she shortly afterwards recovered. I carried her quickly to the gangway, taking care to turn her face towards the taffrail ; and all the way to the shore I kept her eyes from the Isis. Nelson received her ; but from his window she saw her father hanging like a scrubbed hammock ; and when we put her into the carriage to return to Lady Hamilton, the poor little thing hardly knew where she was going, or what she was about. As she drove away, I felt my heart beat quicker, and running into my room, I threw myself on my bed, and, I am not ashamed to say it, cried like a child.

CHAPTER VII.

We ne'er see our foès but we wish them to stay,
They never see *us* but they wish us away;
If they run, why we follow and run them ashore,
And if they won't fight us, we cannot do more.

Hearts of Oak.

I KNEW Tom fast enough when he gave his evidence concerning Tackle, and I did not understand how he came by the name of Macpherson; so, when I was all right again, and Tackle had been buried a week, I got leave to go on board the Gannet, in order to ask how all this came about,—for I had heard that he had been moved from the Discovery to her. I saw him quite another man, under his own name of Tom Toprail; and said I, when I got near the grog-kid, “Tell us, Tom, about it.”

“ I was one of the bad ones who ran him up,” he began. “ I was under a purser’s name, for I had been playing the fool at Plymouth in my last ship : I got on shore and broke my leave, and fearing the left-armed boatswain’s mate, I, like a precious fool, deserted. If you had seen me, Ben, when the ship had sailed, looking behind me at every step, you would have taken me for a monkey in search of his tail. I entered on board of the *Discovery* a few weeks afterwards as William Macpherson, and got into court as a witness owing to being, like the devil in a gale of wind, too busy about other people’s affairs ; for when the captain asked me if I could swear to the man who wounded me, ‘ Yes, sir,’ said I, ‘ I should know his red face anywhere ; and I don’t think this is the first time in my life that I ever saw him.’

“ Well, Ben, that very day my old ship the *Gannet*, which had been left cruising off Boulogne, arrived. Captain Conn, who commanded the *Discovery*, was an old friend of Captain Cotgrave’s, who had the *Gannet*, and he

ordered his gig to be manned to go on board her. I did not belong to any of the boats at the time, but I was flemishing the ropes down about the mainmast, when Captain Conn was impatient because the bowman did not come up smart enough; and says he, 'Here you, Macpherson, can you pull an oar?' 'Yes, sir,' said I, as usual, without thinking. 'Then jump in the boat.' Down he came after me, and in one minute I had let the bow-oar fall in the water. 'Give way, my lads,' said the captain: 'in bow forward!' I jumped up with the boat-hook, and there we were ranging alongside of my old ship. A man was in the fore-chains with a rope, and he called out, "Why, here's Toprail pulling the bow-oar!" The first-lieutenant looked over the side; he saw me also; and no sooner was the captain on board, than I was called up, and there I stood on the quarter-deck, Ben, as you said last night, twisting my hat about as if I could turn it into a skimming-dish.

" 'How's this, Macpherson?' said my new captain.

“ I had nothing to tell for it but the truth. It was of no use spinning a galley-yarn. I told my old captain, that it was the fear of the boatswain’s mate which kept me away after I had broken my leave ; I told him of all the actions I had been in ; and I told him that never a lash had crossed my back. ‘ I hope, sir,’ said I to Captain Conn, ‘ you will speak to Captain Cotgrave in my favour : I ’m sure I have always done my duty as a man, and fought as a seaman ought to do.’

“ Ben, it was touch and go with me ; and if Captain Conn had not seen me under fire, and when we were hard pressed, I ’m thinking I might have had a pull round the fleet to the tune of the rogue’s march : but between those two and Lord Nelson, the R was taken from my name, and the only punishment I had was to be sent on board the Isis to clap on the yard-rope. But I ’m blessed if I lent a hand, for I never tightened my grip ; and I ’m ready to swear a bible oath that I did not trice up that red-headed rogue.”

“ Well, he ’s gone, whether you triced him up

or not ; and he died like a man. Of all things, it most astonished me how a chap with such a conscience could swing so lightly. Now he is gone I forgive him ; and all I hope is, that his name will never come back to my memory again.—Well, Tom, and how has the world used you since we last met, and when we used to sit under the lee of the weather-bulwark and spin yarns, or clap ourselves on the combings of the hatchway, whilst the other took his station in the tier to parcel our tails ?—what have you been about ?”

“ Why, it’s rather hard to say,” replied Tom. “ I was in the Culloden at the Nile, and looked on whilst you were hard at work : I never knew you were in the Vanguard until I heard that you had never left Lord Nelson. Why, I don’t know much what I have been about ; but this I know, that I hate a small craft ; they are always wet ; and while bobbing about the Channel, I don’t think I have ever had a dry foot.”

“ Ah !” said I, “ my old messmate and shipmate, you are a lucky fellow to have weathered

the boatswain's mate, and the skippers with their cocked-hats on. I'm blessed if ever I shall see a captain with his gold-laced scraper on in a cabin, but I shall think of the business you and I have been concerned in !"

Nelson was now in great fear for poor Captain Parker, who had received a severe wound in that business at Boulogne, and I'm sure I carried a hundred notes from the admiral to Dr. Baird concerning him. When he died, I was sent for a lock of his hair, which Nelson declared should be buried with him whenever the day of his death should arrive.

The flag of the admiral, after the execution of Tackle, was shifted to the Amazon ; and in that ship, or rather in that ship's books, for I was mostly on shore, we remained until the middle of October ; when the Peace of Amiens was signed, and we took our leave of ships for a while, and went down to Merton in Surrey ; a place which Nelson bought, and which was shared by Lady Hamilton.

The man who fought the battle of the Nile, St. Vincent, Teneriffe, Copenhagen, and one

hundred and fifty others, and who was now forty-three years of age, was obliged to take to fly-fishing for amusement. I have been with him, carrying a basket up and down the banks of the Wandle, for hours, whilst the admiral used to be flogging the water to find a fish. He might have been a good one at it when he had both flippers; but he never would have made a fortune as a left-handed fisherman. But he was just as active, just as much occupied in endeavouring to catch fish, as he was to catch the French fleet when we sailed about the Mediterranean before the battle of the Nile: in short, whenever he set about anything, he always gave his whole attention to it. It was about this time that I got married.

In this way, always being very busy doing nothing, we went on until the year 1803, when Sir William Hamilton died. He died in his wife's arms, holding Nelson by the hand. I don't know what passed there, for I was not in the room; but I often heard him say afterwards, "I received her from her dying hus-

band." Deaths had been so common in the family, that they bore this better than those which went before him. A man may get accustomed to anything but living on shore on midshipmen's half-pay,—‘nothing a day and find yourself.’

It was on the 16th of May 1803, that the King told the nation that he had had a rupture with the Frenchman; and the consequence was, we went to war. Well, there were lots of work in the dockyards: the press-gangs were out every night, and they made a sailor of a man with a long-tailed coat before he could change his habits. Ships were fitted out; fleets were prepared; Lord Nelson was appointed to the Victory, as commander-in-chief of the Mediterranean; and on the 20th of May we sailed for that station in company with the Amphion frigate.

I have often thought that if they wished to punish an admiral in the next world, the black gentleman has only to appoint him to the command of the blockade squadron, and supersede the dog with three heads. I'm

blessed if that wouldn't be a greater punishment than grilling him inside the gates ! And in this life there's nothing half so bad as polishing Cape Sicie, and keeping for months and months standing in and off shore, eating salt provisions,—but I never had much of that, —and going week after week through the same operations of tacking and wearing, heaving-to and making sail. Nelson never stuck close to the harbour's mouth to keep them in ; he was always for letting them out ; and every now and then he used to send in one or two ships to entice the French admiral to nibble a little ; for he had not forgotten his fishing manœuvres.

Once, when Admiral Campbell stood in on the 23rd of May 1804, with the *Canopus*, the *Donegal*, and the *Amazon*, to see that all the ducks were safe in the pond, or that none had taken flight during our absence, the French admiral, one Monsieur LatoucheTreville, thought this was a good opportunity to make an attempt ; and he got under weigh with two

eighty-fours, three seventy-fours, and three frigates, with the intention of catching the little squadron, which had been engaged half the morning with the batteries, whilst they counted the French fleet. But directly Admiral Campbell edged away towards Lord Nelson, who was about nine leagues off the shore, the French squadron turned tail, and went back again. This was the same man who commanded at Boulogne; and Nelson used to say, that he was sent to beat him again, as he beat us at Boulogne. The Frenchman published an account of his having chased the whole English fleet, and that even Nelson had fled before him. How the admiral swore when he saw the Frenchman's despatch! He got a copy of it, and said, "I'll keep it; and if I take him, by G— he shall eat it!"

From May 1803 to August 1805, Lord Nelson only went out of his ship three times; and I began to think that I should grow up in the shape of the rigging, and that I never should be able to walk on shore without tum-

bling over the stones ! Since England has had a fleet, I don't believe that ever they kept to sea for such a time with less encouragement.

As France was not enough for us, we went to war with Spain ; and on the 18th of January 1804, the French fleet made a start from Toulon. The *Active* and *Seahorse*, two frigates, kept sight of them, until the evening before they communicated with Lord Nelson, who was then at anchor with the fleet off the coast of Sardinia. Up went the signal to un-moor, and then to weigh ; and never did seamen dance round the capstans with more glee : we all thought we had got them at last, and out we stood to sea. For ten days we kept off Corsica and Sardinia, and then made a run to Egypt again. And then you should have heard all those who had been at the Nile talking over that action, saying how we had beat them, and could do it again.

They were not *there* ; no, nor off Malta, nor at Naples : a gale of wind came on, and these gentlemen, not used to such hardships, ran back into Toulon. We were everywhere : off

Barcelona, then in Palma; first north, then south; until the 4th of April 1805, when we stood towards Toulon, and fell in with the *Phœbe* frigate. From her we learnt that Admiral Villeneuve had put to sea on the 31st of March, with eleven ships of the line, seven frigates, and two brigs. We soon got intelligence that they had passed the Straits, and we immediately set to work; but although we carried sail enough to have beat the devil himself had he tried us on a wind, yet we never got sight of Gibraltar until the 30th of April, and then it blew so hard dead an end that we could not pass the Straits. We ran over and anchored in Mazari bay; and on the 5th of May, the wind having blown its lungs out from the west, took a turn at the east, and out we went.

It was no holiday for the topmen, for we carried sail night and day. On the 15th we made Madeira, and on the 4th of June reached Barbadoes. Here we heard of the combined fleet, consisting of eighteen sail of the line, six large frigates, three corvettes, and a brig. They had been seen from St. Lucia on the 28th

of April, standing to the southward. Nelson said he did not believe it ; and he was right. A cursed Yankee swore that he had been boarded by the combined fleet, and that they were bound to Trinidad. ‘ Up helm, my lads ! ’ and away we scudded to the Gulf of Paria : no vessel there big enough to carry a pine-apple. Out again and tried Granada : nothing there but coffee-bushes and attorneys. Heard that they had taken the Diamond Rock, and were at Martinique. Away we went, and on the 9th heard they had passed the night before to leeward of Antigua. As fast as we got into one place, they were in another ; so, on the 13th, having left the soldiers at Antigua, we steered home again. On the 17th of July we made Cape St. Vincent, and we anchored in Gibraltar on the 19th. The next day the admiral went on shore : he had never had his foot out of the Victory since June 16, 1803.

At Gibraltar we fell in with Collingwood. We were soon out again ; and after sailing in every direction according to information, we at last joined Admiral Cornwallis off Ushant,

and the next day stood towards Portsmouth. The admiral had been as much shattered by anxiety as a ship by shot, and it was requisite to repair his hull before he set his rigging up for another cruise. He went to Merton, and I got leave for a week to cruise about Portsmouth.

And now, as I have come to anchor after a long cruise to the Western Indies, I will give my opinion about corporal punishment and impressment of seamen ;—because every now and then I run foul of a kind of sea-lawyer, one of the devil's attorneys, and he is always prating to those who will listen to him, and trying to make them believe that they are, like dogs, taken, stolen, whipped, and kicked by every man with a pair of epaulettes, who happens to walk a quarter-deck.

As for corporal punishment then, — which means a little back-scratching,—I think I may say that it could not be abolished without injury to the service. When the wind is whistling, the rain pouring down, the sea getting up, and the after-guard, main, mizen top-men, and

marines are lugging away at the weather fore-topsail-brace, with their eyes all running over with rain-water, and their tails blowing over to leeward,—I say, when it is a dark, dirty, murky, rainy, windy, snowy night, there is many a man who prefers a hammock to a wet jacket. Of course, if these men remain skulking below, the duty will fall the heavier upon the men aloft. Now, it is nothing but the fear of the cat and her tails that keeps such fellows from sleeping; and if you put them in irons, why you only encourage their idleness. You may make them pick oakum, and that's all you can do. You may stop their grog, and they will get more than their allowance from their shipmates. You may clap them in the black list, but that is a bad remedy; nothing breaks a good man's heart more than being mixed up with the fellows on that list;—and perhaps he may have dozed a bit on the look-out, or the officer of the watch may have seen a stranger before him.

Let them be educated, say some: I say, no, you'll make them worse. Instead of talking

of the good old times, spinning a yarn about the Nile, running up one's memory about Nelson, and such like, they would all be squatting about the decks like a set of Turks, with newspapers before them, settling the affairs of the nation, and talking about that which none of them understand ! Let them alone ; they are used to it, they think less of the disgrace than the pain ; and whilst we have officers who are as humane as they are brave, we have little to fear from tyranny, and that tyranny can always be stoppered.

Well, then, as to impressment, without being the least personal, I take the liberty of saying, that none of the great people understand the subject at all. Who is to know so much about it as we, who have been on shore, and lugged the man out of his warm bed, to make a sailor of him ? And, curse their ungrateful souls ! some of them try to run away afterwards !—as if it was nothing to have board and lodging ; to peck and perch at the King's expense ; to be allowed to fight their enemies ; and to sing a jolly song in the forecastle, when the ship's

under a close-reefed main-topsail, rising over the waters like a duck, with as jolly a gale of wind for a chorus as ever seaman can wish : and then, on Saturday night, to have “ sweet-hearts and wives, and to know that

“ There’s a sweet little cherub which sits up aloft,
To look out for the life of poor Jack !”

Well, there are ungrateful people in the world, and we sometimes find them in these pressed men. And now to the argument. You make a man a sailor ; d—n it ! surely that’s something. You house him, you feed him, you show him the world ; and when he gets riddled about his hull, why you give him a berth in that large palace they call a hospital. Now, they talk of registering merchant-seamen, and they take a great deal of credit to themselves for it ; why, Nelson proposed it in the year 1803 ; for I remember being taken down to the House of Lords, and hearing him speak to all the lords in the kingdom, showing them plans for more easily manning the navy, and preventing desertion by bettering the condition of the seamen. He proposed “ that their certificates

should be registered, and that every man who had served with a good character five years during the war should receive a bounty of two guineas annually after that time, and four guineas after eight years." And I dare say every boy who skulls a wherry has heard that there was a parliament act for any watermen between the age of eighteen and fifty, capable of serving his majesty afloat, who registered themselves, to have a bounty of two pounds a year besides their pay, and not to serve after fifty-five, but to have the bounty. But then, if they deserted, do you see, they were to lose the bounty, and to serve six months without any pay. That's all fair enough: the man takes the bounty to stand by his bargain; if he deserts, he ought to be punished, and if to an enemy, he ought to be hanged. Now, my idea is this;—that to register seamen may be very good for those who have to register them; but as for any benefit arising out of it, I doubt it; because why? impressment is never used but when the necessity is urgent—when it is requisite to man ships in a hurry. Now, sup-

posing the registered men are sailing about the wide world in merchant-ships, how are you to get them to Portsmouth to fit out the Victory? Why, you may send your registering gentleman, with old Scraggs the town-crier's bell, from Johnny Groat's house to the Land's End, giving notice; but how is Tom Wilkins, John Smith, Edward Thornhill, or Robert Potts, to hear him?

Well, let us say that there are thirty thousand men registered in time of peace: war comes suddenly, and impressment has been done away with: the muster-books are sent for, and out of the thirty thousand seamen, twenty-five thousand are found to be afloat; some amongst those Chinese chaps, getting stuff about as good as what we get off our hedges in spring; some at the Fedjee Islands, stealing men's teeth to clap into clubs, and bringing them home as curiosities; some out in the West Indies, working their souls out by drinking new rum; and some gone to Mexico, to bring home the dollars from the mines, which have never come home yet, and never will.

Well, as I said, it's a war. Out come about a score of privateers from Dunkirk, St. Maloes, Dieppe, and from every hole where the flood-tide rises three feet. They snap up a craft here, and they land and burn a house there; every man fore and aft the country is alarmed; and all the while there are the ships in Rotten Row without a man on board of them; whilst, had impressment been the fashion, every mother's son of those idle fellows, who are very busy doing nothing but what is wrong, would have been made honest men,—would have defended their country.

It's all impressment; for if you fell in with a merchant-ship, and you wanted men, you would not ask if it was Tom, Dick, or Harry's turn; but a sufficient crew would be left to manage her, and you would walk off with the rest. If this is not impressment, it is something very like it.

You must have the power to press; and if you have, what do you gain by registering the seamen? And what are the real old men-of-war's men to think of that part of the registering

which makes a man-of-war a prison-ship for those who, belonging to the merchant service, and omitting to register themselves, are to be sent like criminals to the *Fleet*?

I remember one night we wanted some men at the breaking out of the war in 1803 to man the Victory, and, as a press-gang was to be sent, I thought I'd go and see the fun. Accordingly, at the time the boat was to land at Gosport, I crossed over in a shore-boat and arrived just at the same time as a magistrate, who was appointed to accompany the gang, in order to prevent any row and to make people open their doors. It was dark, and the men were armed with stretchers, — pieces of wood just as well in their proper places as flourishing about a man's head, especially if he has not his hat on. The lieutenant who commanded the party was one of your steady kind of men who never makes a noise about anything, but who always gains his point. When we got near a small public-house and heard several voices, he directed his men to stand in such situations as to prevent any escapes; and said he, 'Take care

you don't use any violence, my lads ; but if the fellows won't stop, knock them down.' We were all in a regular cut-throat alley, and the magistrate, who said he was a peace-officer, did not like our preparations for war.

The lieutenant and two of the stoutest men entered the house, and the chaps inside soon stopped their singing.

'Who are you ?' said our officer to one of the warblers.

'A barber,' said he : 'and I should like to know what business it is of yours ?'

'You are just the shaver we want. Johnson, hand this fellow out !'

'I sha'n't go for you, or your Johnsons either. I'm an apprentice, and you can't take me.'

'Johnson,' said the officer ; and in a moment the barber was saved the trouble of paying his bill, and handed outside, where he would have called 'murder,' had not one of the men stopped him by nearly committing the act.

'Who are you ?' said the officer to another.

'A shoemaker, *sir*.' The affair of the barber had rendered him a little more civil.

‘Just the very man we wanted to show our chaps how to cover the foremast-swifter with hide.—Johnson—’

‘I’m a married man with a family, sir, and I understand you can only take seafaring men. My wife will be ruined, and the children left to starve, if you take me; they are dependent on my exertions. I hope, sir, you will consider this, and what she will suffer, poor soul! in her present situation, if you take me on board.’

‘Ah, you are a civil, well-behaved man; but you have got too many children, and I shall be doing the parish a service by giving you employment elsewhere.—Johnson—’

‘Shame, shame!’ said about a dozen ill-looking fellows. ‘You sha’n’t take Leather-soles without a fight for it! Come, my lads, one and all! our only chance is a fair fight; for if that fellow takes one by one, we must go without resistance.’

Up they jumped, doused the lights, and made a rally. The boatswain’s mate, who was with us, gave a pipe; all of our men crowded sail towards the house; when out went the lieute-

nant, Johnson, Peters, and myself, followed by these raggamuffins, who had nearly killed the officer, and split the head of Johnson by throwing a pewter-pot at him. Leathersoles fought like a dragon ; but he got a tap on the skull-cap from one of the Victory's men, which made him a bit of an astronomer ; for he saw more stars flying about than any man who ever sailed on the Pacific. The rest got away every one of them but the barber and the shoemaker ; and we were going towards the boat, when a woman, with about six children, came running after us. The little ones clung to the lieutenant, saying, ' Oh ! save father ! save father ! ' whilst the woman threw her arms round Leathersoles, and declared she should die if he was taken from her. The magistrate had topped his boom directly the scuffle began : he was gone, he said, for assistance, although he never rendered any.

The officer spoke kindly, but the woman would not listen to any reason. ' Give me my husband ! ' she said. ' Oh ! what shall I do ! I shall starve—I shall starve ! Sir,' said she, as

she knelt down to the lieutenant, holding him fast round the knees, ‘if ever you knew what it was to leave your mother—to be torn from your wife—to be compelled to abandon your children to poverty and the poor-house, do not be guilty of this cruelty ! Leave me my Tom—it’s only one man—and look at these dear little innocents, who will pray for you. See, sir, I shall shortly be a mother again. Oh ! what shall I do, what shall I do !’ and here she began twisting her hands, and swabbing her eyes with her dress.

The lieutenant was a man, a right good one ; he knew his duty to the king, and he knew his duty to himself, and he felt a capsize of his heart at separating those the parson had joined together. ‘My good woman,’ he said, ‘let me take him on board ; and to-morrow, if all you say is true, he will be returned.’

‘Oh no ! oh no ! he will not ; if once you take him, I never more shall see him. Oh, Tom ! Tom ! can you leave your wife in this situation ?’ and they rushed into each other’s arms.

‘It’s very distressing,’ said the lieutenant

to the midshipman, ‘ very indeed ; a most unpleasant service ; and in this case, if we had taken the rest, we might have strained a point and released the shoemaker.’

‘ Oh ! do, sir, do !’ said the woman ; and, as she extended her arms to clasp the officer and bless him, a large pillow dropped from under her dress. She saw that it was all over ; so she caught up her burden, and having got a few yards distant, fired a volley of mud at us. She was one of your regular ladies who act mothers every night of impressment. Now both those lads—for they both turned out to be seafaring men—are now in Greenwich ; and it’s many a time I have heard them say, that this was the luckiest night they had ever known.

What is the use of your parliament-men talking about fine feelings ?—everybody has got fine feelings ; but who the devil is to man the ships ? that’s the question. If you can find any way to man the navy with fine feelings and without impressment, why, do it ; it’s no fun to have your head split by a pewter-pot.

Take my word for it, if a parcel of those

chattering fellows who want to get into the Parliament-house, and who make men discontented, in order, as they say, that they may make them happy afterwards, were to hold their tongues upon this subject, we should go on just as well as ever; and the impressed men, like Leathersoles, might live to call it a blessing, rather than rant about it as a curse.

‘Ah!’ said they, ‘God bless the press-gang! or we should have been obliged to work to the last day of our life. Whereas, now we can lay down the load, and have our old shipmates to carry us to the grave; and when we make our last board, which we know we shall from Greenwich-reach, why then we shall have the satisfaction of knowing that we have run through our service like a vessel through the trade-winds, and come safe into harbour at last. Why, after all, what is a sailor’s life, but one of change and chance? Is it not much to say, that a man has been where birds stand upon one leg, and where elephants run about like lap-dogs; where the monkeys pelt you with cocoa-nuts, and the snakes dance to good

music? And then, when we anchor at last, and get spliced for a full due, why, it is some consolation, when we hear of any news from foreign parts, to know all about the place and the people.'

As we rub on through life, many are the strange things we see: some see ghosts, and some ride upon alligators instead of horses, and like the trot; but I like everything in the natural way; and a spanker-boom in a head-sea is quite difficult enough for me. Then as to punishments for pleasure, I have occasionally steered rather wild; but it has been after the duty was done. I never skulked, and left others to do what I ought to have done; and although the cat has whistled over the backs of thousands, not a lash of its tail ever crossed my shoulders.

I remember a gentleman with long tails to his coat asking me one day, 'if Nelson, who was so great an admiral, punished severely, or not.'

'He did,' I replied: 'he never made game of anything excepting his own blindness, and he

knew that an example should be such that people would fear its repetition ; but he was never cruel.' Now-a-days, they want to alter all this : they tell us, if you educate the men, they will have a more honourable feeling, and the cat may be abolished. Now, as I have said, I don't think so. As to education, a seaman gets as much of that in the fore-top, or round the galley-fire, as he wants ; and if he's a good man, he never need fear the gratings, either alive or dead ; and if he is one who is shutting his eyes when it's ' reef top-sails' on a cold night, why he is none the worse for being warmed. They never can do without it, depend upon it. We have got rid of all the tyrants,—and we have had some of them, and then came mutiny and murder : but now, such things can't occur. When that affair did take place, it was all owing to a parcel of sea-lawyers and chaps who used to get about them and make them believe the mischief was greater than it really was.

CHAPTER VIII.

O Susan, Susan, lovely dear,
My vows shall ever true remain;
Let me kiss off that falling tear.

Black-eyed Susan.

It was after that Copenhagen affair—after we had chased the French fleet to the West Indies, and when the admiral gave up the command to Cornwallis, that I had time to look about me on shore. The first thing I did was to write to Crimp, and ask him about my cottage, the trial, and all about the end of that unpleasant business. He told me the proceeds of the house were all sunk in the auctioneer's bill and his own attendance, with the exception of five pounds, which I was to receive when I

called upon another shark of the same name, in a place called Furnival's Inn; giving a proper receipt, and winding up all accounts between me and Crimp. That done, he mentioned that no tidings had ever been learned of Tackle, excepting that he went to Guernsey; but of his after-life they were in ignorance. Poor old Tapes was condemned to the hulks. Susan had sold everything at Cawsand, before the Exchequer, as they call it, had put the Government seal on the door; but the house was seized. She went to Portsmouth, and remained afterwards in a small hut at Gosport. Here she took in needlework, and did all she could to make her husband comfortable in his punishment. She was admitted to see him occasionally; and she soon saw—for women's eyes are quick—that he was gradually declining; his spirits were sunk for life, and no Jacob or Tackle could ever weigh them again.

The brother, who was a partner in the traffic, directly after the trial, and when he found he was safe, took good care to seize all the spoil, and never once came near the Hulks;

although occasionally he sent a little money to buy tobacco. Tapes felt this bitterly : he had perjured himself to serve another, and this was the return—the yellow jacket !

One morning Susan was sent for, and she was desired to take the children on board the hulk with her. She found her husband very ill ; indeed, he was dying. The surgeon had just desired that he might be removed to the hospital-ship, and they were dressing him for the removal.

‘ Susan,’ said the dying man, ‘ it eases all my pain to see you here. I ’m not long for this world : I could not endure the punishment ; it ’s one thing to be a gentleman, and another to be a blackguard. But here, Susan,—kiss me, my dear,—here, at this last moment, for I shall never get to the hospital,—here, let me tell you this, that never woman behaved better or more faithfully to man than you have done to me. Take care of my children,—let me see them, for somehow I feel giddy, and everything seems misty before my eyes. There,’ said he, as he kissed them, ‘ forget that you ever had a father,

whose violation of the law and his pride have killed him.—Love them, Susan—love them, for my sake, as well as for your own conscience' sake, and keep this paper until after I am buried. Don't sob so, Susan !'

But I am somewhat before my story ; for when I received Crimp's letter, saying that Susan was at Gosport and Tapes in the hulk, I asked Lord Nelson's permission to go down ; and he gave me a paper to keep me clear if the press-gang should overhaul me. I did not trust to the water for my passage, but I put myself on top of the coach and was down at Portsmouth in a twinkling. I ran along to the Point, and hopped into the first boat, out again the other side, and there was I at Gosport. I knew pretty well what course to steer, and I made as much sail as my legs could stagger under.

I soon got to a miserable row of huts, from every door of which came out half-a-dozen little children, hardly covered with clothes, and all looking as happy as if nakedness was a luxury.

‘Pray, ma’am,’ said I, ‘do you know where one Mrs. Tapes lives hereabout?’

‘What, the attorney’s *lady*?’ said she with a sneer. I made a bob, meaning yes, and she pointed to a hut further down. ‘Take care,’ said she, ‘how you wipes your feet when you gets there, for my lady’s carpet will be soiled;’ and she tossed up her head like a horse at a funeral; adding, ‘I wonder what better she is than any other convict’s woman?’

I soon got to the hut; but the old harridan whom I had first asked, managed by her infernal noise to attract the attention of every man and woman in the place, and they turned out to look at the stranger as if I had been another convict come amongst them.

Susan was at home, and I walked in. I held out my hand. ‘Susan,’ said I, ‘I have known you from the size of a marlin-spike—I have known you from childhood until *now*, and never did I think to live to see the day that Susan would be ashamed to look me in the face.’

She hung down her head, and I saw a tear drop on the floor.

‘How is *he*?’ I said.

‘Very, very ill indeed,’ she replied, ‘and I fear he cannot live long.’

‘It was not my fault, Susan,’ I continued, ‘that he was discovered; it was the boy’s evidence which clapped him in the bilboes; and although I knew all about it, yet I would sooner have cut my tongue out than brought you to disgrace.’

She looked kindly at me, and I felt all my old love setting my heart on fire. ‘Can I assist you?’ I asked, for I had money. ‘Here, take it, Susan,—I can get more; and if Tapes dies,—and you know we must all die,—I will do all I can to comfort the children of Susan.—Cheer up, cheer up! it does not follow that a ship must be wrecked although it blows a gale, and the land is not far off to leeward.’

We had but a sorrowful meeting, and yet it was kind. Her appearance was altered: she was older, and the slim form of the girl had got broader in the beam. Yet, with all her sorrow,

she was herself in many things. She was as cleanly as ever, and every part of the cottage was as well holy-stoned as a frigate's deck ; but she had a look of grief which made me melancholy.

She took some of the money I offered, and then returned me the rest. The evening was growing towards dark, when I wished her good-night, and promised to call again in the morning. She shook my hand, but she never spoke ; but as she came to the door she took her youngest child in her arms and looked at it, as much as to say, ' You shall have some supper to-night.'

I got to the place where I was to sleep all adrift like. I never thought of the press-gangs, not I ; but I walked about like a squirrel in a cage, going round and round my room without getting the least ahead.

The next morning I got to Susan's just as the man came to take her aboard the hulk ; and I went with her, for I could not leave her. She said, ' she was sure that Tapes would not outlive the day, and that then she should be a

lone widow, without a farthing in the universal world.' I let her go on without interruption, for I knew it did her good, and then she cried and wrung her hands. I'm sure I felt more sad at that moment than ever I did before or since. We were allowed to come alongside, and I assisted the poor creature on deck. We found Tapes evidently sinking fast, and with no probability of ever escaping the dungeon in which he had floated a prisoner. When he gave Susan the paper, I put in my oar, and said, 'Maybe it 's for your brother at Exeter.'

Tapes started, and seemed coming to life again, as he said, 'Who are you?' He looked at me a long while, his eyes ran over my dress, and said, 'No, no, it cannot be!'

'Yes, but it is, Mr. Tapes,' said I. 'Crimp wrote me an account of the bad business, you know; and I was not the one to let either you or Susan sink without lending a hand to bale the boat out. Make your mind easy,' said I: 'you have broken the law of the land, and you have been punished for it; that has nothing to do with the open list up aloft by which

we shall all be mustered ; if you are pretty clear in your heart about the Ten Commandments, you are all right enough,—they don't keep any account of run spirits : so if you are launched now, what does it signify ? I'll take care of Susan and the young ones, therefore keep up to the last like a brave man ; and if I can be of any service concerning your brother,—for I know all about him from Tackle,—you may die comfortably and trust to me.'

' You are not very consoling,' said poor Tapes with a smile, (which looked for all the world like a corpse a-grinning,) ' but I thank you nevertheless. That paper may be of some use in order to place Susan above want. Ah, Mr. Brace ! she has been a wonder of a woman ; she never grew sad over our misfortunes, but she endeavoured to teach me to bear up against them. That was useless. Look here ! see me surrounded by men saved from the gallows by the ingenuity of counsel. Ah, poor Susan, poor Susan ! I have used you ill ; but I swear that when I married you I had no idea of coming to this. I would rather die than live.'

Susan had thrown herself upon her knees by the bed-side ;—it was a kind of stretcher which they had placed for Tapes, for he was so weak that he could not move. She did not cry, for I watched her ; but her face was pale and her countenance fixed ; her lips moved—she was praying.

Tapes, who had exerted himself to speak, had through weakness been replaced on his pillow. He could not speak, but he grasped her hand ; his lips moved, and Susan leant over to catch the sounds. A kind of expression of pleasure came over her poor pale face, which suddenly turned to fear ; she started up, and Tapes was a corpse ! His last breath had reached her cheek ; the jaw fell, and Susan fell across the dead body of her former husband !

I was used to such scenes. I have seen hundreds die and killed : but then there was no woman present ; no children, with their little eyes filled with tears, kneeling round the death-bed.

The other convicts had been landed at the

dock-yard, and we were alone in the ward when the surgeon came. He saw in a second that it was all over, and that he could be of no service: he drew me aside and said, 'Take away the poor creature and her children as soon as you can, or the men will be returning to dinner before we remove the corpse.'

'Ay, ay, sir,' I answered: and when he had left the place, I took Susan's hand from the hand of her husband, and pointed to her children still kneeling and sobbing.

'For their sakes, come away,' I said; 'it is all over! *His* voice has been obeyed,—and, Susan, you know it cannot be recalled! 'Tis useless hanging out the signal of distress when no one can afford assistance—the colours are half-mast now! Come, Susan;' and I used a little gentle violence to draw her away. I thought I should have burst right out when she lifted her youngest child—she had three—to kiss their dead father's face. But I did not, no, not so much as I do now; for the service was to be done, and then it is of no use to falter. By degrees I got them to the foremost bulk-

head; when she turned and said, ‘ Who will bury him—who will bury him ?’

‘ I will, Susan,’ I said; ‘ leave it to me. Come :’ and just as I got her into the boat the other convicts were coming alongside. I heard one or two remarks from some, I suppose, of the most hardened of those villains; and had I been near enough, I would have answered one question with such a stopper on his lips as would have taught him to keep a civil tongue in his mouth.

We landed, and got back to her hut :—ah, it looked mournful enough then; even the children forgot their little prattle, and one sat by the small fire turning her thumbs and looking at the sparks as they flew out of the wood. The eldest was by her mother; the second, a boy, was walking round and round the table.

‘ Cheer up, Susan, said I; ‘ take something to eat.’

‘ Eat !’ she said; ‘ there is nothing to eat now,—we must starve.’

‘ And your little ones?’ said I.

‘ They have not tasted anything since yesterday evening.’

‘ I’ll be back in a minute,’ said I; and away I went for some bread and cheese, and meat, and a pot of porter.

It did my heart good to see the little ones stop their tears and eat. Susan could do nothing but sit still and cry.

In the afternoon she had a little recovered. For I talked to her a good deal about the necessity and duty of her looking after her children. Besides which, a number of the women who lived in the lane came crowding about the house, not to console poor Susan, but to abuse her for being so long with me. I knew it was all right in my heart, so I shut the door in their faces; but still it vexed me to think that, before the body of the husband was cold, such abandoned wretches could be found to talk scandal.

‘ Well,’ said I, Susan, ‘ I’ll go on board and see that all is right and proper there; and tomorrow you must move to a little cottage not far from here, but clear enough of this vermin.’

‘ I cannot, Ben,’ she said, (it was the first time she had called me Ben since her marriage, and I thought I could have kissed her for the fondness,) ‘ for I must give warning and pay the rent to Christmas-day.’

‘ I don’t know much about warning ; but what will you have to pay ?’

‘ One pound five shillings,’ she replied.

‘ Where does the landlord live ?’ said I. She told me ; and I kissed the little ones, told them to talk to their mother, and away I went.

On board the hulk they told me the corpse had been buried, which was sharp work for the undertakers. I paid the rent, got another cottage, paid half-a-year in advance, and the next day, the 2nd September 1805, I had them all moved to a more comfortable place than they had known since the day of the trial.

I waited at Gosport a fortnight ; when one day, as I was talking to an old shipmate, he mentioned that Lord Nelson was expected to take command of the fleet again. I went to Susan, and told her of it. She looked at me and cried. I left her five-and-twenty pounds,

and promised to send her some more ; and away I started. We fought our last fight at Trafalgar the 21st of October following ; and there those fellows, as if not contented with knocking my eye out, lopped off my arm also : it was dead-Greenwich.

I returned and was paid off in the Victory ; but when I got pretty well again, I steered down to Gosport. I was not afraid of a press-gang then.

It was in June 1806 that I saw Susan. ‘Here am I, Susan, half my masts knocked away and my top-light out ; but my heart,’ said I, ‘just as true to you as it was when we parted company at Cawsand some years ago.’ She was looking right well : she had got stout again ; and the cottage looked so cheerful and so nice, that I thought in a moment, now Nelson was dead and I a cripple, that I could spin out the rest of life comfortably.

‘You are come to stay, Ben,’ said Susan ; ‘I will take care of you ; although you have been wounded, you are the same man, and I never can sufficiently repay your kindness.’

‘ Yes, you can,’ said I ; ‘ yes, Susan, my dear Susan, you can.’

She understood me. I offered my only hand, as I said, ‘ It sha’n’t be a left-handed marriage.’ She took it—we were married. It is now nine-and-twenty years since she became mine, and I should lie in my throat if I ever said one word against her. She has borne with all my riotings, even when I heard of that gallant fellow Exmouth, who knocked the stones about those Algerines’ heads. Never have I seen Susan out of temper : she is just what a woman ought to be—even-tempered, religious, good.

The paper I spoke of turned out not altogether amiss. I started for Exeter, and going into the gentleman’s room, ‘ Sir,’ said I, ‘ here is a packet left by your brother, who died aboard the hulks ; and here is Tackle’s oath :—No,’ said I, ‘ that I have got at home. Read this first, sir.’

He did not like it. He turned and he twisted the paper, and then asked me if I knew Tackle. ‘ Certainly,’ said I ; ‘ and I know you. Now listen, sir. Your brother is dead, but Susan and

her children live. If you do as you ought to do, the secret shall die with me : if not, there's Tackle, and I, and Susan——'

'Stop,' said he, 'don't talk so loud : I'll give Susan fifty pounds a-year for ever, and when I die I'll double it.'

'It's a bargain, sir ! and Ben Brace never broke his word.'

'I have heard of you before,' said he.

'I make no matter of doubt of that, sir,' I replied ; 'and every one else in the country, I hope,' says I, scraping my foot a bit, 'has heard of Nelson's coxswain. But we must have the lawyers to work, sir.'

'I understand,' said he. 'Call here to-morrow.' The next day a regular deed — a good deed I called it—was drawn up ; and ever since that the money has been regularly paid. But he made me bring Tackle's paper ; and after overhauling it closely, to see that it had not been opened, he took a curious old seal out of his desk, and he claps his own signal on the letter, saying, " If this is opened and read, I stop the money—do you understand ? If you keep the

secret, which I dare say has been entrusted to you, you shall never want, or your wife, or her children. Now, steer away, and don't let me see you again, for you know too much for me to like you." So, as soon as I had pocketed the letter and drunk his health in some smuggled brandy, I steered back to my wife, and made her happy with the news.

CHAPTER IX.

A soldier and a sailor
Had once a doubtful strife, sir,
To make a maid a wife, sir,
Whose name was buxom Joan.

Love for Love.

WE are curious chaps, we sailors, in regard to marriages, and many's the one I have seen. When your great lords and gentlemen get spliced, they make signals from the hats of their servants, so that all the world may know of the event. And we do something like that; for if a fore-top man gets spliced, we hang some ribbon from the topmast stay; if a gunner, from the main stay; and then we sit down and *stay* long enough over our grog to make us forget ourselves. So we only do at the beginning what others wish to do after they are spliced.

I remember old Tom telling me of his mar-

riage ; but I'm blessed if I don't think Tom had as many wives as the Grand Turk ; and if the Turk got rid of them by sending them adrift on the sea, Tom went the other way to work, for he went adrift himself ; and as he used to say, " he showed his colours and parted company." He told me the following yarn, which I clap in here out of its place, just because it pleases me.

" It was after the battle of Trafalgar," Tom began, when we met, as will be seen hereafter, and when I had lowered my topsails and anchored for life : " I had got my limbs according to the description book ; and when the fleet arrived at Spithead, for I belonged to the Royal Sovereign, I had liberty to go on shore for three days.

" The girls were all for the sailors then. A soldier might have stumped about his regulation step, or stood upon one leg performing the goose-step, like a flamingo in South America,— he might have capered about the Point in his white breeches and leggins, his fine-weather tuffs and tails, until he danced the

coat off his back,—before any one of the craft would have looked at him.

“Of course, when we got on shore, the first thing we did was to steer to the back of the Point, and make up the lee-way of our spirit-room. It is all right enough having an allowance on board ship, but it never does on shore. To tell a man not to get drunk, is like saying to a drowning man, ‘Don’t drink salt-water.’ There we were just as happy as lords;—we drank like fishes to the glory of the Victory; and as long as we could keep our mouths *above* water, we drank and cheered, and sang, until we began to dance to the penn’orth of tune old Catgut was pleased to play.

“Well, we had lots of women in company; and amongst these was one Betsy Matson, a round, plump-looking rosy-faced girl, who had always a smile upon her face, and showed, when her little red lips were opened, as white a set of head-rails as any ship in the navy. Directly I saw her, I felt my heart somehow sicken;—it was just as unpleasant a feeling as the first cut of the cat. I nearly turned sick, and was struck all of a heap.

“ ‘ Ma’am,’ said I, ‘ will you dance a step with me ?’

“ ‘ Yes, surely,’ she answered ; and up we stood for a step. I steered rather wild ; for every now and then, as we were navigating in and out in the reel, I ran foul of my partner : she always smiled so good-naturedly, that, when we had finished, I thought it was all proper to show my fondness ; so I just put my arm round her waist, and I gave her a kiss : when a decent-looking chap of a soldier gave me another kind of slap, and, ‘ Sailor,’ said he, ‘ not so free till better acquainted : I love that young woman, and neither you nor any other man shall kiss her.’

“ It was side out for a bend in a moment ; and as it was only one sodger amongst about forty Trafalgar men, of course we gave him fair play. One or two of our lads stood by him. We ordered in a pot of porter for both of us ; and as I passed Betsy, and saw her piping her eye, said she, ‘ I love you both : I have known the young soldier these two years ; but I am all for Trafalgar lads at my heart.’

“ ‘ Well, ma’am,’ said I, ‘ it’s a stand-up fight for a good prize. My hand is yours : I love you from the bottom of my heart, Betsy.’ So I hitched up my trousers, stretched out my legs, gave her a squint of the eye and a squeeze of the hand, and says I, ‘ It’s not Tom Top-rail, who has been hammering away with two-and-thirty pounders at four ships at once,—for you know, Ben, we had four on the Sovereign at one time,—who is a-going to strike his flag or douse his colours to any such herring-looking fellow, although he is made up of heelball and pipe-clay.’ ”

“ I must say this for the soldier, he was a civil chap, and stripped like a good one. He was not put together as I was, Ben, all ribs and tucks, like a tinker’s donkey ; but he was made up of legs and arms, like a superannuated spider. If I could only get alongside of him, it was the value of the admiral’s gold-laced hat and epaulettes to a waister’s stockings that I won the day without much trouble : but then, again, considering I saw double, and might hit at the wrong figure, some people

might fancy the soldier, young and raw as he was.

“I shook hands with him before I began, and told him I rather liked him ; but that this was an affair of love, and the sooner we settled who liked her most, the more respectable it would be for both of us. At this time the landlord, who was quite astonished at our silence, came in, and offered to settle the business without the fight. He said, he would make us both dead drunk, and take the girl himself ; but no sooner had he proposed this, than his wife flew at him like a bull-dog, clawed his face and tore his jacket,—so we lent a hand to send him back to his bar, having had his claret tapped in the room. This being done, there was a call for the soldier ; and he, casting a sheep’s-eye at Betsy, and pumping up all his wind to make a sigh, made himself up to stand fire just as if he was standing at attention.

“Bill Jones, and some more of the Sovereign’s, stood by me ; Tom Walker, and three other chaps from the Temeraire, lent a hand

to the soldier. I made all sail at him in a jiffy, and I should have run him aboard if the liquor had not puzzled my eyes. I tripped up over a part of the boards, and I went at him head-foremost, bobbing about like a jolly-boat in a cross tide. I don't know if so be the soldier had ever been at Malta and seen those half-and-half Africans puzzle the bulls, but he did just what they do ; he waited until I was within hail, and then stepped on one side. I had good way upon me, and ran end on to the store-room bulkhead : down went a whole barrow-load of pewter-pots and glasses, and the landlord's wife and daughter set up as great a row as a hundred sea-gulls after a piece of pork.

“ Thank God, Ben, I'm no soft-headed fellow like a child six months old, not I ; no black chap in Jamaica ever had a thicker head, and all the mischief I got from my bad steerage was being brought up all standing, and having as many stars dancing before my eyes as would have served to navigate the Spanish fleet. Well, the soldier, who was sober, would not take any

advantage of my lubberly conduct ; but when I fell down as I did, he was the first to pick me up and pass me over to my own side. The Temeraires gave three cheers, and the Sovereigns—all off coats in a moment ; the women, for we had plenty of them, took the side on which their fancy-men were standing, and we had about as pretty a blow-up as ever was seen at a fair in Paddy's land. I don't much remember how it all finished ; but I recollect the next morning rousing up from the straw in a cold place they call the lock-up. I had plenty of company—all hands but two had been pressed by these peace-officers, and about eleven o'clock we all toed a line in front of the justice.

“ ‘ What was this disturbance last night, constable ? ’ said he. ‘ Speak out, I'm rather deaf—Eh ? ’ And he clapped up one hand to his lug to make a kind of a trumpet.

“ ‘ Please your honour's worship, ’ said one of those chaps, roaring out loud enough to be heard half-way up the Peak of Teneriffe, ‘ we took all these men and women from the Three Jolly Sailors, at the Point. They were all fighting

like enemies, and making such a noise, it was impossible to sleep, and I told them to keep the peace.'

" ' Ah, quite right,' said the deaf justice with the spectacles ; ' you told them that now they might sleep in peace, like jolly sailors, after fighting their enemies : that's quite right—now go on with the charge.'

" ' There was a soldier,' the constable continued.

" ' Avaust there !' said Bill Jones ; ' it was Tom Toprail there — he without his jacket — that charged.'

" ' Who charged ?' said his worship ; ' who gave him in charge ?'

" ' Tom commenced action,' said Jones ; ' he tried to run aboard of him.'

" ' Eh !' said the magistrate ; ' one at a time, if you please. Go on, constable, and don't speak as if you were whispering secrets. That man,' meaning Bill Jones, ' says, in the action he was aboard the same ship with him—gallant fellows ! Now go on.'

" ' I told them, please your worship,' conti-

nued the constable, 'that I would take them up.'

" 'Quite right,' replied the magistrate.

" 'So, your worship, they knocked me down.'

" 'Eh, my fine fellows, that was very wrong; knock down a peace-officer when doing his duty!'

" 'He declared war first,' said Jones; 'for when we were a little in liquor, your worship, and were showing how we boarded the Frenchmen, in came that fellow, with a dozen more of his press-gang, and walked us off: he popped us into a place without tobacco, grog, or lights, and he came master-at-arms over us, and clapped us under lock and key.'

" That speech of Jones's quite flabbergasted his worship, for says he,—'Oh! I perceive this disturbance arose out of a press-gang wanting to press a soldier, who was regaling himself with tobacco and grog, and who was a little in liquor and mistook the men for Frenchmen—so he used his arms, and was assisted by the master of the inn.'

" After hammering away at the drum-head of

his worship's ear, he was made at length to understand the whole business ; but to lock up sailors then was no joke—so he gave us some advice, just the same as the captain used to give before he punished us for being drunk—and finished by saying he dismissed us. ‘ Now go along,’ said he, ‘ and be quiet, my men,—here's five shillings to drink the King's health.’ Upon which Bill called out—‘ Three cheers, lads, for his worship !’ and in spite of some mutinous rascals — those chaps who had stolen us away from ourselves—we did just as he told us, kept quite quiet and drank the King's health ; roaring out ‘ Long life to his worship and bad luck to his clerk !’ but being quite orderly and sober, excepting when we got one of the constables to drink with us : then we sat down in a circle and played *goose*, and I'm blessed if we did not serve him out for clapping us under an arrest the night before ; he never had such a roasting before in his precious life.

“ Away we steered for the Three Jolly Sailors, and there we found Betsy. Poor dear little soul ! she had taken our being captured so much

to heart, that she and the soldier contrived to drink a sufficient quantity to forget our misfortunes. The soldier was all abroad, but Betsy could just have seen a hole through a grating.

“ ‘Here,’ said I, ‘Betsy, — here am I, Tom Toprail, with as long a tail as any man in the Sovereign,—as full a purse—at least it’s a-coming from the prizes,—and as hearty a chap as ever chewed tobacco. Now, Betsy, this is all about it: I have liberty, so have my messmates and shipmates here, to remain on shore until Saturday night; — then, or on Sunday morning, we must all be on board to muster at division and hear the articles of war read. We do that instead of going to church, and a man need as much remember them as his prayers, for if he does not, he may swing out of this life, and cut a caper from the yard-arm. Well, as I was a-saying—Betsy, there’s my flipper; it’s none the worse for being rather hard in the palm and tarry about the claws;—there it is, and, as I said before, I love you from the very bottom of my heart;’ and I clapped my hand well below it to make her know how deep my love was. ‘Now if

you 'll act as becomes a woman, and pitch that soldier overboard, Bill Jones and the rest of them shall see you my wife to-morrow, — and, Lord love you, Betsy ! who do you think would marry a soldier in these times ? chaps that stand in boxes half the night with a musket over their shoulders. And then to think that they are made to walk about, all to put their feet down at the same time ! I should like to see the drill-sergeant, and be d—d to him ! who could put his feet down this fashion.' And forthwith I tipped them the double shuffle and fling,—clapped my hat—my neat little round hat—on one side of my head, and gave such a twirl that my tail came before my face. ' There !' said I, as I stood upon one leg like the adjutant-bird, and clapped my left arm akimbo—' let's see the soldier that ever walked a parade do that in time, and my name's not Tom Top-rail. So now, Betsy, none of your coming Corporal Sly over me !'

“She was a lovely craft : she clapped her head-gear like corkscrews all down her pretty face : and then her eyes ! why she looked right through

one!—and such head-rails,—my eyes!—and then her lips—whew! what a kiss I gave her! She was, every inch of her, cut out for a seaman's wife, and she behaved like a woman,—she said 'Yes,' and we drank her health with three cheers; the old fiddler struck up 'Moll in the wad,' and he never played with more life and spirit before.

"It was all settled, all agreed; so I took and slewed her round, and never in my born days did I see a neater-cut craft from stem to stern. She cut off a small piece of the tow-rope of my head; and leaving her to bouse her own jib up as taut as she chose, I went out to look for a lawyer and a parson. I told the first fellow what I wanted, and he said he would soon set me on the right tack; so he made the signal to follow the motions of the commodore: he clapped on his hat, and we all followed him.

"We hove-to off a decent-looking harbour enough, and after a rum old chap, with a swivel eye, had asked me some questions,—I only remember one, which was, 'how many wives I had alive already?'—and after grinning at the

lawyer, he handed out a licence—that's the word,—and the business was all straight enough.

“ ‘ You are a jolly good fellow,’ said I to the lawyer; ‘ what would you like to drink? I am in your debt for your assistance, and you can order anything you like from shrub to swipes; and if so be you would like to see my craft, you can step into the Jolly Sailors, and there we shall find her blowing a cloud and drinking the king's health.’

“ ‘ If you had seen my face, Ben,’ said Tom to me as he came to this part of the story, ‘ when the lawyer said he would merely take his bill, you would have thought that I had tumbled amongst the cannibals, and was like to be eat with my clothes on. He went home, and he chalked out two pound twelve and more for the licence; he clapped on six shillings and eight-pence for his advice, and he charged thirteen and four-pence for having walked with us. Well, we all set to work to see what shots we had in the locker, and we could not muster between us more than two pound five; and says I, ‘ That's enough for you, and all you've done, my

hearty ! Why, I 'm obliged to skim up to the mast-head, and run out to the yard-arm, when it is blowing great guns and small arms, or raining marline-spikes with their points downwards, and I don't get as much as you have got for that scaly piece of paper in four months ; and then I stand to be shot at every time we come within sight of a Frenchman, whilst you sit there upon a high stool dangling your legs and dancing to your own tune. Hang me if I give you any more ; because why, do you know, old chap ? because I 'm run aground ; I have not enough to turn over for a new moon or jingle upon a tombstone ; so take that and be civil.'

“ The black man merely said he would have what was his due, or he would not give up the licence, and then we could not be married ; whereupon Bill Jones, who was always ready to assist a friend upon a pinch, made a grab at the thing and got hold of it. The little gentleman was too late to stop him ; and as Bill made sail out of the enemy's harbour, he made signal for one or two of us to blockade the port ; so when

the lawyer was coming in chase, Joe Gibson and one or two more kept sailing athwart his hawse, and Bill and I got safe with the prize. The landlord put us up to the rest, which was merely to send notice to the parish-clerk of the splice; and that matter was all right.

“When we had got over the business, and had ordered some ham and eggs, with a few sausages and cabbages, Bill clapped his hand upon the end of his neckerchief, and gave a puff of wind from his mouth, as much as to say, ‘You may blow out the end like a pendant, and there’s no weight to keep it steady.’ There we were, about a dozen of us, brought to anchor alongside of the table, hoisting in our provisions and wine, and with the devil a farthing to pay the store-keeper of the victualling yard.

“I whispered to Bill—‘Bill,’ says I, ‘I’ll just run over to Moses, on the Hard, and I’ll pledge my prize-money, and I’ll take a new set of toggery from his shop, in order to be decent-like in the church.’

“So I left Betsy, who was a cloth or two in the wind, and sailing a little by the head with

the rest; and away I steered to Moses. He was at home, or some one so cursedly like him that I should not have known one from the other; but all Jews are alike. The shark knew me; for many's the time I had taken a jacket from his kit when he came on board; and knowing how sharp these fellows are to catch a seaman, I thought I would let him bite at the bait well before I hooked him; so said I, 'Moses, here we are, all alive, and with plenty of prizes:'—To be sure, that was rather more smoke than reality.

“ ‘My Gosh! yes,’ says Moses; ‘how much wosh you take for your prize-money?’ ”

“ ‘There's a nibble! thought I; this fellow would swallow bait, hook, line, and all.—‘How much, Moses? Why, how much do you think I ought to get?’ ”

“ ‘Five pounds,’ said Moses.

“ ‘Five devils!’ said I; ‘more likely fifty, and that would hardly be enough for all the work we have had.’ ”

“ ‘It's a sight of money, Mr. Toprail,’ said Moses;—‘fifty pounds!! it vill be long times before it is paid, ay?’ ”

“ ‘ Yes,’ said I ; ‘ so long that a man might die before he got it. What’s the price of this new turn-out here ?’

“ ‘ Oh, it ’s very sheap, Mr. Toprail,—very sheap ; just three pounds,—only one little three pounds. You can take it, Mr. Toprail, upon the security of your prize-money. If you make me your agent, I can let you have many things : as you say, you may be dead and buried before the money is paid. Come, I ’ll give you twenty pounds and this suit of clothes for your share. You are an A.B. I know.’

“ ‘ Then you know wrong, my jolly friend Moses ; for I ’m captain of the fore-top.’

“ ‘ Petty officer’s rating,’ said Moses. ‘ Fifty pounds ! quite impossible. I ’ll give you thirty—thirty now, this morning, in one hour ; and that’s more worth to you, Mr. Toprail, than fifty, four years from this time.’

“ ‘ Thirty, and the suit of rigging complete : white ducks, blue jacket, black tie, white stockings, long-quartered shoes, new hat with Royal Sovereign marked on the ribbon. That, or

go. Give us your hand upon it. I dare say you will get more than half back in traps. What 's the price of a watch?"

"He showed me a hundred all very fine watches; and all very *sheap*, as he said. I was not quite so sheepish as to buy them. But I signed a paper, making over my prize-money; and I touched the thirty pounds; and wrapping my new suit up in a pocket-handkerchief which I bought of Moses, I steered away to the Three Jolly Sailors.

"Knowing that I should be rather hazy before the evening was over, I went up to a room in which I was to swing my hammock, and I clapped everything under hatches, and stowed the key away in a corner, where I knew I should find it the next day. I got a one-pound note changed; and I told Bill what tack I had been sailing upon, and we sat down for a jollification. Betsy was now a little less the worse for liquor than before, and I wanted her to take another glass, because I thought, poor girl, what she must feel at the thoughts of leaving the soldier, and all her

friends, to live aboard with me when the ship was in harbour.

“ ‘No,’ says she, ‘no more, my dear Tom ; but I ’m thinking we had better go and get me some new ribbons for to-morrow ; you see, mine are none the cleaner for last night’s business ; besides, you know that I must look clean and tidy, or I shall not be much credit to one of the Sovereign’s crew.’

“ ‘That ’s all as it should be, Betsy,’ said I ; ‘I like a tidy craft ; so up anchor, and away we go. Bill Jones will give you a rowlock for your larboard oar ; and here ’s mine for the other. So out we bolted, and sailed up the street in search of a shop. Betsy knew the navigation well ; and before long, although we had contrived to run foul of a number of shore-going lubbers,—for though we understood the sailing orders, “Ships on the starboard tack to keep their wind, and those on the larboard tack to bear up,” yet they knew nothing of navigation, and were with every flaw of wind sailing right athwart us. Everybody looked at us ; every one knew

we belonged to Collingwood's ship, and certainly never was there more respectful behaviour like, for they all tried to get out of our way ; and as we were trying to do the same, we fell foul of one another. Betsy wanted some red ribbons ; but I said, ' No, you shan't carry any false colours!—true blue never stains.' So I made her clap on a blue ribbon in the cap and round her dear little chest-trees, and bought a pair of blue shoes, after she had festooned some blue ribbon round the bottom of her dress. All this being done, I made sail back to the Jolly Sailors, and had a regular *sheevo* before we turned in. There was dancing, and drinking, and kissing the bride ; such cheering, and singing, and fiddling, that the like was never seen ; and when I turned out the next morning, my head was turning like a boy's peg-top.

“ Well, we mustered all hands of us by eight o'clock ; and I'll tell you how we set about it : never was there such a lark at Portsmouth since the first day sailors were made. Bill and I, and some more, were all new-rigged,

from the mast-head downwards: and Betsy looked a regular sailor's wife, when she turned out, spick and span. It was not right for chaps such as we, belonging to the Sovereign, to be married like a parcel of soldiers, who march to church with their side-arms and stand all attention before the parson. It is all well enough for them to toddle on foot; but I was not a-going to smuggle tobacco after that fashion. So, first of all, I mustered my shipmates, and then set about the order of sailing. We were twelve belonging to the Sovereign, and Betsy had six belonging to her, to sail in her wake. They were all dressed alike, but Betsy was worth them all. We were to be spliced at ten, and we had only two hours to get the convoy together.

“I felt my pockets—my money was safe; and I was up to the mark to do the thing like a good 'un. So I ordered all the coaches I could find. I got together six decent-looking articles, and we clapped our colours at the mast-head of the coachman. Some one said, they ought to be white; and I think it was

old Drinkhard the landlord : but Bill, who had just taken a glass to the success of the day, shoved his fist in the old fellow's mouth ; and says he, ' White ! why, you fool, do you think we are a-going to show a flag of truce to the parson ? No, no ; blue 's our colour ; and if we go all fair and above-board, that 's only what we ought to do : so up with the blue at the main ;'—and we shoved large cockades into the hats, and made the horse-whippers show another from the breastwork of their button-holes.

“Of course, bringing all the vehicles together in this manner made a bit of a stir amongst the folks about the Point ; and they had time enough to reconnoitre our force, for when we got the carriages in line, as we intended to start, we hove about for a good swig to the honour of the bride ; and in order to keep up the hearts of the women, we made them hoist in enough to fill their spirit-rooms. Well, time went on, and a quarter to ten came. ‘Now,’ says Bill, ‘heave and a weigh, my lads ; and come, stick on the colours, and

hurrah aloft !' So up I jumped, and handed Betsy into the cabin of the coach with three more of her tribe, whilst I and Bill got on the quarter-deck.

" ' Heave and paul,' said Watson. ' I'm not going in this jolly-boat on wheels ! I'll ride a horse, and keep a look-out ahead of the squadron ; and what's more, I've one a-coming, and here it is, so avaust heaving a minute. Let's hang the colours to the flag-staff forward ;' and he claps a bunch of blue ribbons round the ears of the animal, jamming it into the ears, and saying, ' There, my boys ; there's no mistake here ; for as I make sail, they'll see the colours even out of the hawse-holes ! Jump up, youngster,' said Watson, ' behind me ; and now I'm off.'— And off he was, sure enough ; for he gave himself too much heel to starboard, and fell on the other side. We soon righted him, however, and he started ahead.

" ' You mustn't sit on the roof,' said the coachman to me and Bill and Scrapehard, who had got on the quarter-deck of the coach, the old fiddler playing ' Moll in the Wad,' and slew-

ing round on his stern like a fifer on the capstan when it's 'up anchor !'

" ' Drive on,' said Bill, ' or I'm blessed if I don't sit on your shoulders ! Why, here's a mutiny before we read our commissions ! You are a pretty particular scoundrel to say that Tom and I, two fore-topmen, are going to be smuggled into your stow-hole below. Start ahead and save the tide, or we shall have the parson a-lecturing us.—Make sail,' said Bill, as he stood upright on the roof, ' and follow the motions of the commodore ;' and off we went.

" ' Oh ! the Gibson ahoy !' said I.

" ' Hulloa !' said he.

" ' Keep close in the commodore's wake ; and if your chap does not clap a little more canvass on his coach, do you supersede him,—do you hear ?'

" ' Ay, ay, sir !' said Gibson.

" Well, the chap that steered Joe would not crack on—not a bit : so Joe says, ' By your leave, my man ;' and he endeavoured to take hold of the tiller-ropes.

“ ‘No,’ said the coachman ; ‘ this is my place.’

“ ‘Your place!’ said Joe. ‘ I’ll let you know that I’ll be captain of my own ship ;’ and he mimics an old skipper, who used always to begin with that when he intended to end with the cat. ‘ So, out of the way, guardo, and make way for a stationer.’ The coachman still held on, and Joe still held on also. Joe got the whip, and began to bellows away at the nags, until the animals, not being accustomed to punishment, forged ahead in spite of the hawser which was fast to their bows, and they ran their bowsprit right smack through the after-panels of our stern-frame, carried away the stern-lantern, and pooped the women.

“ ‘Up helm, you lubberly scoundrel!’ said Joe: ‘ I told you not to pass the commodore, but to back the mizen-top sail in time, and there you are right on board of him. Why, you lubber, you went end-on like a bull with his peak up ;’ and seizing hold of the tiller-ropes, he gave the larboard one a haul, the horses made a start, the larboard wheel got

foul of a post, and over went Joe, coachman, and coach. Joe, who was like a cat, fell upon his legs without being hurt, and called out for the next ship in the line to take the place of the one capsized ; but, as I was not going into action without all my line complete, I gave the signal to heave-to to repair damages.

“ The women in the cabin, finding themselves pooped, thought they were going down stern foremost, and roared out to open the cabin-doors ; whilst Joe, and a landsman who was standing thereabout, lifted the coachman, who had been wounded in the leg, into a 'pothecary's, which was within hail. Leaving him there, we righted the craft, and Joe jumped upon deck, seized hold of the tiller-ropes, and made signal for ready for sea. We filled our main-top-sail and forged ahead ; and Joe, who had got both lines, one in each hand, and who sprawled his legs out on the foot-rope to hinder his fetching way when she rolled,—for we were right before the wind,—looked as if he understood navigation. His eyes were wide open ; but some of the ribbons got foul of his optics ; his long

curls—for, do you mind, in those days we wore our hair like corkscrews—got blowing athwart his face; his hat was cocked on one side, and his big chew was a little to leeward, although his tail stuck out behind like the staff of a rocket, to keep him head to wind. He got hauling at both ropes at once, so that his vessel was not under command; she had no steerage way, but just the reverse; for the animals made a stern-board before Joe could drop the steerage to get hold of the whip, and he backed aboard of the coach astern of him.

“This threw the whole line in confusion; and when Joe started on end again, he kept yawing about like a pig in a high wind; it was hard a-starboard and hard a-port every moment. The squadron were all in disorder, and although Bill roared like a bull for the ship next in line to make sail and occupy Gibson’s place, yet it was no use; there was not a master in the fleet who could take charge of a vessel in such rocky water; and the crews of half the squadron were in a state of mutiny. I think Gibson would have weathered the

corner of the church after all, and come safe to anchor, if it had not been for about a thousand spalpeens of boys who kept shouting ‘ A sailor adrift on a carriage!’ and bobbing under the horses’ noses until they got discontented at being worked so hard, and began to mutiny outright. One fired away at Joe with his heels, who dropped the helm and touched him up over the stern. This made both worse ; for Joe had got all hands to the whip, and was only determined to punish his crew for their bad behaviour.

“ We had not got far, when we found the look-out craft hove-to and trimming ship.

“ ‘ Hulloa,’ said I, ‘ what ’s the matter, Watson?’

“ ‘ We have hove-to to repair damages,’ said he ; ‘ for as I was steering end-on for the church, the craft got into a head sea, and after bobbing about run aground upon her knees, and shook my timbers a bit, for I went over the bows ; whilst the youngster, as the ship lifted forward with the sea, slipped over the

stern ; but we shall be ready in a moment. I've repaired damages forward, and I'm shifting my ballast aft, for she sails too much by the head. I can manage her well enough now ; but I think you had better shift the boy on one of your nags. So away with you, little one,' said he, giving him a slap on the back ; 'and mind, do you hear ? 'Victualled on board the day discharged !' '

" 'Come on deck here,' said Bill ; 'and do you hear, turn to and dance us a hornpipe as we go along. Strike up, old Scrapehard ! and tip us your best hornpipe, and, squadron make sail !'

" In a short time we had got off the harbour and were unlading the cargo, when Joe came along, going about fourteen knots, his tiller-ropes lost, and his ship running away with him.

" 'Shorten sail,' said Bill, 'or you 'll be aboard the church.'

" 'Luff, Joe, luff, and weather it,' said I. 'My eyes ! there he goes, right end on !' and

down came the horses, pitching Joe over the bows.

“ Nothing ever hurt his health but going without his grog. He was up in a moment, and reported that his ship was wrecked, her stem-piece stove in, and that she was bilged and lying over on her starboard side. The crew were all safe, and we prepared to enter the harbour. I caught hold of Betsy by the flipper ; and Bill was behind with Moll Davis. She was rather the worse for her allowance in the morning, and would sing, although a chap who said he was a clerk in the establishment tried to stop her.

“ ‘ To the devil wid you ! ’ said Moll Davis. ‘ Do you think, you black-looking raven, that I won’t sing a song on the day of Betsy’s marriage ? ’ And she set off at the top of her voice, which was rather thick and hoarse than otherwise, and she bellowed out something about a ‘ sweet William.’ Now it so turned out that William was the name of the soldier ; and Betsy thinking it was meant for a shot at her, turned round and whipped off the ribbon from

her bonnet in a trice. I caught hold of Betsy by the arm, and Bill held Moll Davis, or we should have had a fight before marriage, for all the other women rushed up to take Betsy's part, except one or two, who always liked a fight, and therefore took the weakest side in order to make sure of one. This brought us all to our reasons, and we walked into the church as quiet and as orderly as men at a funeral.

“Well, we were all ranged one alongside of each other round some rail-work, inside of which stood the parson; and he soon began to read something, which none of us seemed to understand, until he looked me full in the face with one eye, and said he, ‘Will you have this woman to thy wedded wife?’ Now the parson squinted a bit with the other, and I thought his eye, which was looking towards his starboard ear, was upon Moll Davis; and as I understood the words to mean, whether I would take Moll Davis to my wedded wife, and thought that this was a kind of making peace after the war, I answered, ‘Cer-

tainly not, sir; she's abused her shamefully, and when this is over she may box her trotters where she likes.' Bill cut in, and said he, 'I think Tom is right; for she had no business to sing what she did.' And Betsy said, 'No, your reverence; she shan't come to me.'

"The clerk began to say something; but Bill soon stopped him by saying, 'Avaust heaven, young man! hadn't you better take a reef in your jawing-tacks, and double your distance?'

"The clergyman explained what it meant, and he asked me again: 'Certainly, sir,' said I; 'I come here for that same purpose.'

" 'You must say,' said the clerk, '*I will.*'

" 'Certainly!' said I.

" 'That won't do,' continued the devil-dodger; 'you must say only, *I will.*'

" '*I will,*' says I; 'and now I hope you are satisfied.'

"We got through the business in about a quarter of an hour; and we were then taken into a room to sign our names.

"Well, I never could write, for I never had

no education like ; so I clapped a cross, such as we make to the paper about the prize-agents. Well, Betsy could not write, so she stuck another. Then they told Bill he must witness it, and he couldn't write either : and then Moll Davis made her mark, which was a large black blot on the book ; for she was then all nohow, and dabbed down the pen, and then shoved it athwart the clerk's muzzle. But the best of all was Bill when he heard the little chap in black ask for a fee :

“ ‘ What 's that ? ’ said Bill ; ‘ I never heard that liquor before.’

“ ‘ It 's money I want,’ said the clerk : ‘ any little gift—a crown or so.’

“ ‘ Take that upon your crown,’ said Bill, and he put the clerk's hat on, and giving it one rap, flattened in the jib-sheet, and only left the mouth and chin to be seen.

“ ‘ Now then,’ said I, after all hands had kissed Betsy, ‘ the devil take the hindmost, and let 's have a ride round the town. And, perhaps,’ said I respectfully,—‘ perhaps your worship will come with us?—we won't stow you

in the cabin ; you shall be up aloft amongst the seamen on the quarter-deck, where you can see the ship is properly worked.' And I am blessed if I don't think he thought we were going to press him ; for he sheered off, leaving his clerk to see us off.

" No sooner was he gone than the little black fellow followed us out, and began to say something quite disrespectful to Bill ; who quietly turned round, took the little chap under his arm, and clapped him in amongst the women. They began to play ' none of my child,' and shoved him about from one to another, until, as we were sailing along at a good rate, the door flew open, and out went old straight-hair, with a shot in his stern which nearly sent him across the street.

" All Portsmouth turned out to see us. There was Watson touching up his horse over the taffrail, and it kicked up behind high enough to have lifted the spanker-boom from the crutch ; and went on worse than ever. I roared out for him to pass within hail, but the animal would not answer its helm at all ; but

slewing round like a boat in an eddy, it made a start on one side, and in went Dick Watson into a gentleman's breakfast parlour; whilst away went the horse, tossing up its head and tail, and kicking and flinging in all directions: this cleared the passage for the squadron, and on we went through the crowd.

Whenever the boys cheered, I stood up and returned the salute with an equal number of guns. Slap we went through one street, down another; round one corner, then another; Bill and I on the top of the coach, standing on the roof and cheering. Old Scrapehard was fiddling like a good one; the youngster, with his hat held up over his head, was standing on one leg like a flamingo, and slewing about like a dog-vane in a calm; whilst the women had got their heads out of the windows and made more row than the devil in a gale of wind. At last the horses were near coming to an anchor without our ranging the cables; they were bitted already; so we drove down to the Point, took the bridles in, and got our crew and passengers all safe. Then it was that we got to

work with the knives and forks ; and we played a rare stick at eating. We stuck at it, dancing and smoking, until ten o'clock at night, when all hands were as drunk as owls ; and I had given Betsy nearly all my money to take care of, which she did right well, for I never could get a farthing back again.

“ So ended my marriage ; and it was a real sailor's marriage, got up in a moment, and it lasted nearly as long. We got on well enough the next day : but on Sunday morning we all returned to our ships ; and I told the first-lieutenant that I had got spliced, and asked to have Betsy aboard. The ship was going round to the River the next day, so I couldn't get leave either to go to her, or she to come to me. I thought, to be sure, she might as well have tried to have got alongside ; but I never got a glance of her eye from the morning of our mustering on board until now. I got one of the purser's steward's lads, who could handle a pen without making a cross, and I wrote her this letter. “ ‘ Dearest Betsy,—Why don't you come alongside in the bum-boat ? I

have been standing in the starboard fore-chains from one till four bells, overhauling the craft which came within hail. Come, that's a good girl! up stick and make sail! If I can only get a word with you under the bows, I'm satisfied.'

"Well, what do you think she writes to me, or gets somebody else to write to me? —

" 'Old Tom,—I know you are ship-bound, church-bound, and poverty-struck; you belong to no parish but *Port Sea*, and you may whistle for good luck and for Betsy Matson.'

"It ran right into my heart, and gave me the hiccups for a fortnight; and I never was all right in the head until I heard she had married the soldier under another name, and that I had saved my allotment."

CHAPTER X.

Let us take the road :
Hark ! I hear the sound of coaches,
The hour of attack approaches,
To arms, brave boys, be bold !

Thieves' Chorus, BEGGAR'S OPERA.

THERE 's many a sailor who marries as Tom did, and gets a divorce without bothering the lawyers.

We had not long arrived at Portsmouth before we heard of the fight—one can hardly call it a victory—of Sir Robert Calder. It 's hardly worth my talking about it now ; but at that time people talked of it enough : the comparison was made between Calder and Nelson ; and those who knew the latter, knew that he would never have left the enemy until they had an-

chored in Portsmouth or taken him to Brest. Why, we used to say, only to take two ships out of twenty when we had fifteen, was going back to the old times of Benbow. But, since the Nile and Copenhagen, we looked for something more ship-shape than lying-to to secure a couple of prizes, and bobbing about within sight of each other for four days, without even the compliment of a salute Turkish fashion. Besides, when they had taken two out of twenty, they might with less trouble have helped themselves to four more out of the eighteen ; because after the capture of the first two, it reduced the odds to eighteen to seventeen ; and what's that but a certainty ?—they ought to have had every man of them, and placed them to make ivory ships and boxes in the prisons near Portsmouth.

I have always seen it the case, that when you allow a Frenchman to gain an advantage at first, there is no man in the world more difficult to beat into quiet behaviour. They are all life and spirits ; they go on like bulls, head down and tail up ; and, like those animals, they

shut their eyes to any danger from their enemy. But just cow them at first — just, as we say, take the shine out of them — and when they turn round to run, freshen their way a little by a few raking shots, and they never will face about again. Now here they are very unlike the Spaniard; you can't get him to go forward so easily: but clap him behind a stone wall, and there he'll remain, feasting upon garlick, smoking tobacco, and just as difficult to be killed as a badger in a hole. On sea or on shore Frenchmen are the same. If they can face you well at first, they will give you plenty of trouble; if you can outface them, they are done. When once one flag comes down, they send chaps to the signal halyards in every ship of the fleet.

After our arrival at Portsmouth, we went to Merton. *She* was there, as lovely as ever. She received him; she loved him, she never lost sight of him; and when he used to get melancholy and walk in the garden, as if to avoid everybody and talk to himself, she used to meet him; — and then he was no more of an admiral than I am; his flag was struck before a shot was

fired, and he was walked off like a ship into an enemy's port. I used to be fond of gardening, — that is, taking up the weeds and watering the flowers; it's like flogging the skulker and rewarding the good man. To be sure, I did not know much about the thing; but it kept me employed; and when a man is employed, he keeps out of mischief.

Nelson did not like this shore-going life: he would start up and walk round and round the walks of the garden, without stopping, for hours. He put me in mind of that curious little creature the armadillo, who goes round and round, like a cooper round a cask, and seems never to get tired.

I was at work as usual, when I heard them coming along. Nelson was talking about his unsuccessful search after the French fleet when we went to the West Indies; and she was comforting him, and telling him that he would yet have that fleet, and that he would return to *her* victorious. I could see them plainly. Nelson had tears in his eyes when he looked at this beautiful creature, and said he, "Brave

Emma—good Emma! if there were more Emmas, there would be more Nelsons.”

I don't know how it is, but it is so; the greater a man is, the more sure he is to be conquered by women. I never saw a fore-mast man, who was known in the ship, and a brave straight-forward fellow, that had not six wives.

It was on the 13th September 1805 that we left Merton again. The command of the fleet had been given to Nelson, and I was despatched early in the morning to Portsmouth to set the cabin to rights, so that I did not see the last parting between Nelson and her; but I heard afterwards that he had some slight jog on the elbow that he might not come back again. I got on board; and the next morning you might have seen me with my round jacket and Guernsey, all a-taunto, and stuck up as stiff as a midshipman on half-pay steering the barge to Sally Port.

I have seen many a sight in my born days, — I saw the King and all Naples come out to see Nelson; but I'm blessed if ever I re-

member to have seen such a sight as I saw on the 14th September. Every man and boy of Portsmouth,—and a precious gang they were, for there was every man from the mayor to the sweeper, and every woman, from the landlady of the Fountain to Sal from the back of the Point,—all mustered in the streets and along the parapets to see him off. Some of them knelt down for his blessing, and others blubbered like boiling lobsters; many held up their hands aloft; and never yet, since England was England, was there ever such a sight seen. We have had men as great as Nelson,—and one now living, God bless him!—who have done their duty to their king and their country; and we have seen them cheered—ay, and they ought always to have been cheered. I remember, when Nelson lay wounded in his bed in Bond Street, after the business of Teneriffe, and the mob came to make him light up his windows, when they heard it was Nelson, instead of following their old pranks, they gave three cheers, and left him to sleep in quiet.

We sailed from Spithead. I think I see the ship under weigh now. We stood out under easy canvass, for there were some shore-boats along-side, with one or two of the wives of some of the crew, and Nelson did not crack on for half an hour, knowing that the distance would soon be made up; and willing to give the poor fellows time to say the last word; — and we all know, that no sooner has the boat shoved off, than in our hurry we have forgotten to say what we wished most remembered. At last they were off, and the hands were turned up—“ Make sail.” Then it was that the handkerchiefs were waving, the women crying, and many a man felt a down-heartedness which did not belong to the crew of the Victory.

We had with us the Ajax, Defiance, Agamemnon, and Euryalus. There was our old friend the Agamemnon sticking to us like a leech; and it was quite a pleasure, when I looked at her through the glass,—for I was made signal-man and coxswain,—to think of all the days I spent on board of her; how many times I had spun my yarns to Tom and

others, when the wind roared, and the green seas flew over the decks ;—there she was—she seemed proud to follow Nelson, for she never sailed so well since she was built as she did when she started with us.

On the 29th September, — it was the admiral's birthday,—we arrived off Cadiz, and Nelson took the command of the fleet from Collingwood : but there was no saluting flags, for Nelson did not wish the Frenchmen and Spaniards to know that he had arrived : and he was well aware that his name would not exactly tempt them to come out. He, who had always beaten them, was not likely to be afraid of them. It was round the decks that we might expect the enemy out before long : the frigates in-shore had remarked them bending sails and getting all ready for a start. We knew it would be a hard affair ; and every blessed night, when a breeze of wind filled the sails, we heard more yarns from some of the crew than ever appeared in the Gazette. Then we used to turn a stave about some old love affair ; and no man, who did not know of what

stuff sailors were composed, would ever have believed that they were waiting to be shot at like pigeons in a trap, and thought it a pleasure. Why, we got up a playhouse, and acted kings and queens, and such like. It was such fun to see the boys dressed up as girls: and Billy Snuffle, who had as much hair on his face as would make a chafing-mat for the main-yard, used to make himself into a woman by clapping on an old Panama hat, which was jammed into a bonnet, and hanging the tails of a swab down his cheeks to look like curls; and when he spoke, and screwed up his mouth like a monkey in pain, out came a deep voice which would have done for the first-lieutenant in a gale of wind. Nobody would have thought, when they saw us all grinning at the show, that we were expecting every moment to stand to our guns, and perhaps in a quarter of an hour to bundle all the actors overboard, and carry half the spectators to the cockpit. Sailors are always merry; and the higher the wind blows, and the more danger there is near, the more lively and the more resolute they become. I have seen

them, from the burning of a ship to the battle of Trafalgar, and I know that the greater the peril, the greater is their determination.

During the day, whilst we were about sixty miles to the westward of Cadiz, we always preserved our line of battle in order of sailing : the fleet were kept in two lines, with an advance squadron of eight of the fastest sailers. Collingwood led his line, and Nelson his ; and never before did two English admirals seem to understand each other better than these two gallant men. It was not the first time they had met on service ; and in the earlier part of their lives, Collingwood succeeded Nelson in many of the ships out of which the latter was promoted or exchanged. There was no paltry jealousy between them ; they were above all that. Collingwood might have envied the chances which fell to Nelson, but he never would have attributed the success of the great admiral to chance alone : if the same chance had fallen to Collingwood, he would have fought the battle of the Nile just as well as Nelson. The enemies of our country did not

know Collingwood ; but the English service knew and respected him.

It is probable that the enemy would have put to sea before the 19th October, had they not heard that Nelson had joined the fleet : for they knew well enough that Admiral Louis had been sent to Gibraltar for provisions and water, with six sail of the line ; and Villeneuve, who commanded the combined fleets, was not a man to let a chance escape him. The arrival of Nelson, and the reinforcement we brought with us, put a stopper upon the Frenchman's calculation ; and he and old Gravina used to smoke a cigar or two, and look at each other like two strange cats in a garret. Villeneuve did not like the hero of the Nile—the conqueror of Copenhagen, for an antagonist, and therefore he remained in harbour until his master turned him out.

It was on the 19th October that the Mars, the nearest ship to the fleet which formed the line of communication with the in-shore squadron, made the signal that the enemy were coming out of harbour. The wind was south-south-

west, and the admiral had his cocked-hat on. I remember this; for when the signal was reported to him, he jumped on the poop in such a hurry that he left his scraper behind him. There was such a fire in his eye, that it would have been dangerous had the aprons been off the locks of the guns. "Let them come!" said he; "I won't force them back. Only let me get between them and their harbour, and we will try our strength on the high seas. Keep a strict look-out upon the Mars," said he: "Brace, keep your eye fixed upon her; you may have some more swords under your arm between this and the day after to-morrow."

The wind had varied a little more towards the west, and we now steered south-east, in order to let the enemy out of harbour comfortably, and give them time to eat their dinners: and I know I had very little time for mine, for every two minutes I heard the admiral's voice to the signal-lieutenant, "Has Brace got his eye upon the Mars?" and then I felt a kind of warm feeling, as if I was somebody,

with my glass to my eye. At two o'clock I called out, "Signal going up on board the Mars!" One of the flags had broken its top, and I saw it before it cleared the topsail-yard. Every eye was turned to her: but I made out the numbers first; and there it was as large as the flags could make it—"The enemy have put to sea." Every man fore and aft knew it as soon as the admiral; for the signal-lieutenant, who had got the book, could not report such a signal in the usual cold manner, but he called out from the break of the poop as he bundled over the leaves—"The enemy have put to sea, my lord!"

As a pretty deal of curiosity had been excited from the first signal, and as the men got nearer the gangways than they usually did, the signal was heard by those on the lookout, and the ship shook with the tramp of the men as they scudded on deck to look at the Mars.

"Steer south-east," said the admiral, "and make more sail!" That was soon done. We did not want the hands turned up. I believe,

if Nelson had called out to turn the ship inside out, it would have been done in the turn of a handspike.

The day closed ; the signal had been repeated ; and the men, fore and aft, began to get together in small numbers, and they were talking over the chances. Many of them had been at Copenhagen ; some in the Nile, and with St. Vincent ; and all had been more or less pretty warmly engaged at one time or another. Powder and shot was nothing new to them ; and it would have been quite sufficient to convince Villeneuve, had he only listened to the yarns that were spun that night, and the confidence of every man and boy on board the Victory, that the combined fleet would sail into Portsmouth without troubling either the French or the Spaniards to navigate or to work them.

I have often thought since of the feeling of the men on that night. Sailors are men just as much as those gentlemen who wear swallow-tailed coats ; and when about to do their duty, they think of others as well as themselves,

and give many an anxious thought for those who depend upon them, and who are the subject of their every-day's thoughts and Saturday night's song. Now we knew that the largest fleet we ever yet tackled was out of its stow-hole ; we knew who commanded us ; and we did not want any ghost to come over the water to tell us, that if they had been twice as many we should not have turned our sterns towards them.

I was coming along the forecastle, thinking myself that either an arm or a leg would part company before I had my sailing orders for the next world, — for I never expected to go to heaven with all my limbs, — when whom should I see perched between two of the guns, and looking as cast-down as a chap before punishment when he tows a line alongside of the master-at-arms and sees the boatswain's mates and their cats, than Bob Matson !

There was not a finer fellow in the whole fleet than Bob Matson. He was a fore-top-man ; a regular dare-devil ; always in danger ; the first to volunteer for any work except

swab-wringing ; and a man who took his allowance of grog at sea, and his pleasure ashore, as well as any man in the whole service. Well, there he was, doubled up like a tailor at work, with his hands together, looking for all the world like a duck in a thunderstorm.

“What cheer, messmate?” said I. “Why, Bob, you look precious down in the mouth ; and you ’re pumping up all the wind of your stomach to make a sigh. What ’s the matter, lad ?”

“It ’s all over, Fanny,” said he ; “I shall never see you any more !”

“See whom ?” said I.

“See her !” said he—“my own little darling daughter ! She is about three years old now,” he continued ; “and when we were fitting out at Portsmouth, there was not a man in the mess who did not love her. We used to clap her on the table ; and then each of us would coax her to come and eat with us, and I always thought that the one she went to was envied by the others : and if she went constantly to one, I felt as if I did not like him, because

I thought he was robbing me of what was mine by right ; and though I loved him for loving her, yet I felt that I would rather she came to me. Then, Ben, you know, she used to pull our tails and laugh ; and, Lord love her dear little soul ! I did hope then to have seen her many and many a time before I went to Davy Jones's locker. But now it's all over ; I shall never see her any more ! It's not for myself I care the value of a quid ; I'm used to be shot at, and there never yet was a shot fired that Bob Matson would bob at ; but now, Ben, I'm not so certain that I don't wish myself out of this business : I feel very queer."

" Why, Bob," said I, " this is not like you ; --for when the topsail was blowing out of the holt-rope, and no one else would go aloft, you would be out at the yard-arm, when every flap of the sail was nearer a finish to a man's life, than half the shot from any fleet. But now to strike your colours before you are hulled, and to sink before you've tried to plug up the shot-holes, is not like you. What, are you going to die beforehand ?—not you. They say amongst the

soldiers, ‘ Every bullet has its billet.’ Well, what then?—why, if we are to go, we can’t help ourselves, and we may as well keep our heads up until we are knocked down.”

“ That’s all right enough, Ben, and I used to say so,” he said ; “ but I’ve been told of it all ; it’s not to-morrow, but the day after : I shall never see that sun set ; I shall——”

“ Brace!” said the admiral. Up I jumped like a rocket, and was skimming the horizon with a night-glass.

“ My lord,” I answered.

“ Have you counted the fleet ?” said the officer of the watch, who came forward.

“ Yes, sir,” said I ; “ and there is no strange sail in sight.”

This finished my day’s work, and now I had to turn in until daylight. In passing round the forecastle I stopped to observe some of the men, whose hopes and spirits were all of the right sort : five or six of them had got the grindstone, and were sharpening their cutlasses ; others putting on a new becket ; whilst some got their boarding-pikes and sharp-

ened the points ; one or two were working away to their own music, as they hummed out an old stave just loud enough for the rest to hear the words ; one was sitting down polishing his pistol and rubbing up the lock ; and when they spoke, it was all about the coming fight. The moon was out, the night was fine, the wind was light, and now and then, when the grindstone allowed me to hear,—for that is a sharp unpleasant sound,—I caught the following conversation :—

“ I ’ve been thinking,” said one man, who was a square-built fellow, and who was turning the stone for another to sharpen a cutlass upon, —“ I’ve been thinking, messmates, what’s the reason Frenchmen never wear tails ?”

“ Why,” said another, “ don’t you know, Bob ?—it’s because we should have something to hold on by when they retreat.—But,” he continued, feeling the edge of the cutlass, “ this would shave a mouse asleep, and I don’t want a tail to steady the head of the chap this reaches.”

“ We shall be at it to-morrow,” said another,

“and before dark many’s the one who’ll lose the number of his mess.”

“Never mind, Bill; they won’t go without companions; and it’s much better to have two languages than one.”

“There’ll be three of them,—we shan’t have much trouble with the Spaniards,” replied another. “Well, this business will settle the war, and then hurrah for Portsmouth! My eyes! how the girls will stare if we bring in that large fleet!”

I went over the other side and found Bob Matson with both his hands over his face, being the only man of all the crew who liked to be alone; ‘so,’ says I to myself, ‘I’ll just cheer him up a bit.’

“What! Bob,” said I, giving him a gentle tap on the shoulder as I sat down by his side —“What! Bob, still thinking that the hands will be turned up at daylight to-morrow, and that before noon you’ll be mustered aloft?”

“Ay, Ben, you have hit it, and I’ve been trying to see how the log stands; and to tell you the truth, Ben, I’m not all right here.

I've a weight upon me as heavy as the butcher's block or the armourer's anvil, and if I could only shake off that, I should be all right again."

"Well, Bob," said I, "let's hear all about it. I have heard those Catholics say, that when they make a clear board of it to the priest, they feel all the lighter and happier; and if so be that I can clear away any of the rubbish in the cable-tier of your heart, so as to let it run out to the clinch without a bight or a bend jamming in the hatchway, I'm not the man to see a friend run on shore and get bilged without laying an anchor out to windward for him. Come," said I, "here we are, away from those lads who are grinding cutlasses and rubbing up boarding-pikes and pistols; Henderson has got his eye on the Euryalus, and it's my turn to take a spell; so I'm all ready to hear your story."

"Ay, Ben, it's not my wife and child that I care so much about now, because I fancy that every blessed man, woman, and child, who comes into this world, gets through life some-

how. In all my cruisings about the world I never knew one man die of actual starvation. It's true, some of us have all the rough and none of the smooth ; and if a girl is not very pretty she may stand a chance of going on through the tide-way of life without being wrecked when young ; and if a man is not a lazy skulker, he must be cursedly out of luck, if in these times, when soldiers and sailors are wanted every month, he starves with the king's allowance : so that my son and daughter must hug the wind, or bear up and make sail, as either distress comes or prosperity shines. As for my wife, she has got a sister who will look out for her ; and, as I said before, although I feel as much as any foremast-man can feel at parting with them, yet I 'm not afraid of Tom's coming to the gallows or Fanny's cruising at the Point ; and if men and women steer clear of these two devilments, why they may muster aloft with the best of us."

" Well then," said I, " what is it, Bob, that has sunk your spirits to your heels ? Here you are, clear of the gallows, and just going into as

pretty an action as any seaman could wish, under as fine a fellow as ever had bunting at his mast-head; and if we weather the shot, why we may fetch up Greenwich reach, and moor ship for life in a palace good enough for a king."

"Ben," said Bob, looking me full in the face, "it's not shot that I'm afraid will hit me,—I hope they won't miss me,—I'm afraid of being left alive. Why do you start so? can't you fancy any crime that would make a man so wretched here as to wish to be there?" and he pointed to the fore-castle after-port.

"Certainly not," I replied; "and when I see a man like you who is always foremost in any fun, singing the best song, and dancing the best and quickest step, and never asking to go on shore, I can't think that so light a pair of heels could carry so smartly a heavy weight of heart. So, if you are going to run a rig upon me, Bob, why away you go; it would make the sand run through the glass the faster, and he must be a curious man who could sleep soundly with that large fleet in sight."

“That’s true enough, Ben; but I never sleep. I shut my eyes and I rest my limbs, but a man who has done what I have done never sleeps, Ben;—he never sleeps, I tell you. The parson may talk what he likes about heaven and hell—where the first may be I don’t know, but for the last, Ben, it’s here!” and he beat his heart. “I’ll tell it you all; but first let me caution you, that although that Peak of Pico, that we saw not four months back, has cold snow on its outside and looks always calm and still, yet it has fire within it. You’ll not say a word about what I am going to tell you, Ben;—you won’t, when all that’s left of Bob Matson is shoved over the standing part of the fore-sheet,—you won’t say, Ben,—Never mind thinking of Bob—he died too good a death for a *murderer*!”

I jumped up, but he caught me by my arm.

“What! would you blow the gaff upon me, Ben? Come, sit down, hear me out; the devil’s never so black as he is painted; and it may happen that even a murderer may find an excuse for his crime.”

I'm blessed if I did not shake like a rope-yarn in a breeze, and my heart went flap against my ribs as the topsails against the mast in a calm with a sea running. Thinks I, this can't be Tackle's ghost, for he touched me; and although I have heard of these spirits turning a ship right over during the night, and the crew only finding it out the next morning by the sails being wet, and every hammock having a turn in its clews, yet I never believed in those things, and always thought that ghosts turned out like the "Nobody" who drank the boatswain's grog; so I looked at him again, and says I, "Whatever it may be, Bob, I'd rather not hear it: you've been a favourite in the ship, they tell me; and I have seen too much of the end of one of your class ever to look on it again."

"The yard-arm!" said he, as he looked up and pointed to the fore yard-arm, whilst the moon came full upon his countenance, and showed me a face as white as snow—"I don't fear that," he continued, "because no one here could bear witness against me; and if they

could, I would shortly be out of the reach of the master-at-arms. Now, Ben, listen to a short account of my life. I'm only thirty now, —but thirty years looks a long time if we are to wait that time; but when we have lived it, one hour's quick conversation, and we may run over every occurrence of good or evil worth mentioning; the rest is made up of doing nothing, and the world helping us. It's no use my telling you my name, — I'm under that of a purser, of course: no man deserts from a ship or commits a crime, and then sails about the world with his proper name in the watch-bill; if he did, every time the mate mustered him, he would think the hour was come for the court-martial, and he would never be able to look happy when his heart was sad. Ben, there's hardly a trade of any daring that I have not been concerned in: I've been a bit of a smuggler, a bit of a pirate, a bit of a privateer's man, and when I was not employed afloat, I looked after the concern ashore."

"What concern?" said I.

"Why," he continued, "robbing is a trade

which requires one always to be practising, because it demands a constant exercise of cunning and courage. Any man may pick up a purse when he finds it on the high road, and no one is looking on to tell who took it; but when you have to filch it first, and fight for it afterwards; or this,—and he drew his hand across his throat,—“and then plunder pirate-like; why, it requires some steadiness of heart and hand: so that when I was not concerned on board, I used to keep myself ready, by seizing hold of any one passing by the lonely road; and if a woman, why, she would at once make a main-topsail haul, and scud for it. But I seldom touched those poor devils, for they never went about with anything else but a few coppers or a crooked sixpence, and they used to swear the latter always brought good luck to them, but that their curse, if it was stolen, would make it more unlucky to the possessor. And strange, Ben, as it may appear to you, yet I’ll swear I was so afraid of an old woman’s curse, that I would rather have faced ten men than one of those devils in petticoats.

What between a little plunder afloat and a little pilfering on shore—for one was a good haul that we made—I thought it was better to cut and run for the States, and see what honesty would do for a man who had made a little wickedness his prosperity. At the time of which I speak, although French privateers were skimming about the seas, it was not unusual for many people to emigrate; and as I had enough—to be sure, not honestly gotten—to start me in life, I thought that with good health, a strong arm, and constant employment, I might get a clear conscience, and satisfy myself that the little I had taken from each would not in the long run hurt them, but might to a certainty make one or two happy and comfortable.—Happy! Ben; how little I knew what was to follow! how little did I guess what were to be my sufferings! I've been told that, sooner or later, the crime is visited on the culprit, and that, although the officers of justice are slow, they are always sure. In my case I have proved it false: but the constant expectation of a discovery has kept me always on

the look-out and ready for a start. Well, Ben, it was shortly after one of my most desperate acts that I resolved to ship myself off. I was unencumbered with wife or child, relative or friend. When a man takes to my kind of life, the less he has of any of these, the better for himself and his escape. The gentleman whom I had robbed, with two others of our gang to assist me, was young and rich; he was just married, and his young wife, a nice little craft, was in the carriage with him. I went to the carriage-door, and the man said, 'My good fellow, you can take all I have got, but do not frighten this poor lady.' That was past doing, for she had rolled herself up in the corner, and he held out his purse, which seemed well stuffed with paper and chinked of guineas—for I knew the sound from silver as well as you know No. 1 from No. 9 in the signal-flags.

" 'May I go on now?' said the young gentleman; 'you have got all I have, upon my honour.'

"My two companions had lashed the posti-

lion's arms behind him, tied his own pocket-handkerchief round his eyes, and taken him over a hedge by the road-side; so I gave the signal, and they both came. I told them of the prize and the haul I had made, when one of them said, 'Oh, gammon! if he is rich, he has got a watch; if she is young, she has got some rings.'

" 'Well,' said I, 'we have got enough, and we had better let them off.'

" 'No, no,' said the other; 'you be off with what you have got, and make sure of that, and we'll take care of these two birds.' So, without more ado, they opened both doors.

" 'Come, miss,' says one, 'let's see your pretty face, we are not going to eat you;' and he took hold of her hand. 'Ay, I thought so; rings by dozens; here's a watch and a chain. Come, Tom, look sharp and assist the gentleman, who'll be all night finding his fob and his pockets. Now, miss, let me feel your pocket,—by Jemini, she is a beauty! and I'll have a kiss before I go: so out with your pretty self, the road's dry, and give me a kiss.'

The young man, who had quietly submitted to be robbed, rushed like a tiger upon him and seized him by the collar. The man who had attended upon the gentleman ran round and caught him by the neck; the girl screamed, and I gave the whistle of alarm; not that I heard any one, but I was afraid some one might be heard. Tom endeavoured to shake off the gentleman, who clung to him faster than ever, and swore he would hold him on until assistance came; the postilion set up a howl of murder, and Jim had nothing for it but to whip out his knife and cut the gentleman across both hands until the fingers opened. At this he called out louder, 'Murder! murder!' The woman's voice was shriller and more piercing; for there's no voice like that of a scream, which might be heard at any distance. Tom, enraged more than Jim, seized the poor gentleman by the collar, and cut his throat. I repeated the whistle, retreating in a contrary direction to the one I knew they would go. Some people heard the noise, but long before I heard the account or saw what

followed, I was off, and never looked behind me.

“ It so happened that some farmers, returning from one of the adjoining villages, heard the cries of the woman, and got their horses into a gallop. On hearing the sound, both Jim and his companion started off and came the same way that I was retreating. I saw them stepping out like cowards, or men who knew their lives would be taken in return for that they had attempted ; and as they both were gaining on me fast, I clambered up a tree, and stowed myself away. They had been looking behind, and had not, I suppose, seen me. There, Ben, I sat, trembling more than any leaf of the tree, and I saw my companions, thank God ! run past. They would have sheltered themselves there, had not the horsemen been too near ; they were well in sight, for, as if it was arranged up aloft that such cruelty should not escape, the moon, which until then had not been bright owing to the clouds, now came out as clear as the sun on the line. My two companions, having run

through the wood, separated ; but some of the farmers, who knew the country, galloped off round the edge of it, whilst two dashed by the tree, cheering each other on. I think there were six of them altogether. I heard the cheer from those who had gone round, and their cry that the rascals had broke cover ; and they called out ‘Tally ho !’ as if they had been hunting a fox. When the sound grew less and less, I got down from the tree, keeping close along a hedge in an opposite direction ; I crossed the road about a quarter of a mile from where we had committed the robbery, and, I feared, murder, and, striking right across the country, got back to London.

“I did not wait there long. With the money I had, I changed my rigging, had my head shaved, clapped a chafing mat on my skull, and making myself up like a gentleman, got on the top of a Bristol coach, and the next day saw the sea, and with it my hopes of escape.

“In the papers I soon read—for I can read, ay, and write too—the full account of the whole affair:—thank God ! the gentleman was not

dead ! But when I saw the number of the notes—I had them then about me—published, I almost wished that Jim had done it, and then the dead man would have told no tales. There I learnt that both men had been taken, that my name was as large as life, and my description fully given, in the Hue and Cry, with fifty pounds reward for my apprehension. Fancy, Ben, how I felt when I read this, which was stuck about Bristol, and, as I looked at it, saw a man who had been reading it also look at me in the face. It was guilt that made me tremble, for I should not have known myself had I looked in a glass. I did not skulk about the town, but I had a room in a good inn ; and having a convenient cold, I feared the cool air of day and the bleak wind of the night.

CHAPTER XI.

I thought it no use to repine at my lot,
Or to bear with my perils ashore,
So I pack'd up the trifling remnants I'd got,
And a trifle, alas! was my store.

A handkerchief held all the treasure I had,
Which over my shoulder I threw,
Away then I trudged with a heart very sad,
To join with some jolly ship's crew.

Sea Song.

“THE vessel which was to convey us to America,” continued Bob Matson, “was all a-taunto, and many passengers were already on board: she was called the Hope. About eight days after my arrival at Bristol we sailed. If I could tell you the delight with which I saw my native land grow less and less to my sight, I would; but no words can convey half the real pleasure I felt when I was once again on the

high seas, my passage paid for, my notes safe, my purse still full. I had shipped as a farmer willing to try another country; and from my youthful appearance I was regarded as one of the best on board. And to tell you the truth, Ben, (barring that I could not sleep and was always afraid when any man looked me well in the face, and which I found made me strike my colours at once, and down went my eyes—I never could look a man full in the face after that night,) I felt that I was not the worst-looking man on board.

“Amongst the passengers was a family of the name of Richardson. The father had seen better days and brighter prospects; and although in those times the farmers in England were reaping a rich harvest, and becoming every day more and more affluent, yet somehow everything went wrong with him, until he made up his mind to try another country. He sold off everything he could, and he started with as many spades, rakes, ploughs, &c. as would have done to have cultivated the whole of the Bermudas. His family consisted

of himself, his wife, and two daughters. Lucy was the oldest; she was about sixteen,—but such a craft, Ben!—I'm not the man to do her justice, either in heart or form. She cried bitterly when we weighed anchor; and perhaps with the exception of the captain, for the wind was fair, I was the only man on board who smiled inwardly when the breeze caught the topsails, and I heard the first splash of the water as we began to forge ahead. Ay, she thought of all her best friends and relations, from whom she was parting for ever,—she thought of the home of her youth, where she had been born and bred,—and she seemed to look after a little strip of a tree which she brought on board, as a kind of a link in the long chain which was to reach from America to England. Far different were my thoughts. I left the land where the first object that would reach my eyes was the reward for my capture—the shore on which every man who stood was my enemy—the country which I had turned adrift when it turned against me. I hated the very name of an

Englishman; and I thought that one day I might have my revenge by fighting against it. As the wind freshened, and the Hope drew from the land, so in proportion rose my spirits and my security.

“No sooner had the ship cleared the Channel, than the roll of a cross sea began to work like physic on our passengers, and all hands, Richardsons and all, were on their beam-ends. It had no effect upon me, excepting that I thought it prudent to sham a little; which, however, wore off wonderfully when the skipper boy told me that dinner was ready; and I steered below and handled a knife and fork, and looked at a bit of beef with an eye not at all like that of a sick man.

“‘Why hulloo, Master Williams,’ said the skipper, ‘considering you have never been on board a ship before, you get over the sickness rather quickly.’—‘Why yees,’ said I, clapping on a bit of the inland lingo; ‘yees, I have, zur: I have felt very ill, but the further we go the better I get. I’ll just trouble you for another slice and rather thick.’

“ ‘ Ah ! I ’m blessed if you ’re not one of the king’s hard bargains — short hair and long teeth ; for I ’m thinking all that crow’s nest on your head is a wig, and at the rate you cut it, you would puzzle his majesty’s allowance a little.’

“ ‘ Just so, sir,’ said I ; ‘ eating always does me good, and I feel better already.’

“ ‘ I ’m in hopes,’ said he, ‘ that you are quite well already ?’

“ ‘ We are all in *hopes*,’ said I, smiling a bit ; ‘ only a little piece more and a potatoe, and then I can top up with some cheese and biscuit. It ’s blowing fresh, Master Captain,’ said I, ‘ and how far do you think we have run from Bristol ?’

“ ‘ Well,’ said the captain, ‘ that is an odd question too for a landsman ; for I have remarked that every passenger I ever carried never asked how far we had run, but how much farther they had to go ; and they never thought of what was behind, but what was before them.’

“ ‘ Ah,’ said I, rather off my guard, ‘ it ’s

not every man who likes to think of what he has left behind him.'

" 'Certainly not,' replied the captain; 'and men in your situation never do.'

" I looked at him in the face, and thought I saw my hangman. 'Why how,' says I, 'do you know about my situation?'

" 'I don't know much,' he replied, 'to be sure: but people don't leave Old England without being half ruined by distress, or thinking it wise to cut and run, lest some one else should put a stopper round their necks. Come, you look as if you were going to be sick again; and no wonder, for if you stow so much in the hold, you must expect to be water-logged. I wonder how your legs can bear all that top weight: why, man, if you were hanged to-morrow, Jack Ketch would have to borrow a hawser.—The breeze freshens gaily,' said the captain, as he continued.

" Relieved from a subject rather too painful to be pleasant, I was glad of this sudden 'bout ship' in the conversation; and said I, 'Crack on her, captain,—clap on a preventive

main-topsail brace,—hand the mizen-topsail, that's no use now, it only takes the wind out of the larger sails; (we were right before it;) and I'll bet the skipper's gold-laced scraper against a waister's shoes that she'll go nine knots clean off the reel.'

“ ‘My eyes and limbs!’ said the captain, ‘what have we here? I thought you dropped the Somerset lingo pretty readily; but now you've parted company with the farmer and shipped on the blue jacket rather smartly.’

“ Alarmed at what I had said, I turned it off with a smile; and says I, getting a little back towards Taunton in the words, ‘Oh! I'ze heard some un who was aboard a ship talk about that at Bristol, and so I remembered it.’

“ ‘And zo,’ said the captain as he stepped on deck, ‘you've a good memory, and recollect your language again.’

“ I was only twenty-two years of age at this time, and I never could keep a stopper upon my feelings. As the sun got towards the water's edge, I got up in spirits, and every lift we got abaft from the rising sea, surged me

more and more on in security : the only thing I feared was coming across a man-of-war, or being run on board of by a privateer from St. Malo's. I had deserted from one of our ships, which I shan't say a word about now ; and I did not want to go to prison, for then I might have been exchanged and have got back again to England,—but as to that I had made my mind up, that if I was captured I would enter at once on board the Frenchman, and run all chance of the yard-arm.

It was now near sun-set of the fourth day since we had sailed—the wind had increased from the eastward—the sea was running high—the weather looking worse and worse—thick clouds were settling on the horizon—the scud flew over our heads—and everything promised a hard gale of wind. I was standing abaft with Lucy, who suffered much from sea-sickness, but who had recovered more than the rest, and, in spite of the shivering which came over her, she preferred the air above to the stench below, and was leaning over the taffrail, holding on for fear of being bundled from the

side as the old 'Hope' rolled merrily along. I'll tell you, Ben, I never was born of poor parents; my father was better to do in the world than ever his son will be: bad society at school led to worse wishes as I grew up. I grew impatient of restraint; and God knows I have only run into the very net out of which I thought to escape! I ran away from school, but not before I had learnt enough of the gentleman never entirely to forget it: my pride would not let me go back again, and from the first moment I leagued with smugglers as an amusement, I found myself going fast and fast into worse crimes, and associating with worse characters. Ben, it's easy to fall, but hard to recover: after the first timid step is taken, it is wonderful how we walk on, and how our recklessness increases.

“ Like all men who lead desperate lives, I soon became fond of women and strong drink; the sight of a pretty face would turn me from any crime but the one it might occasion, and the liquor would stimulate me to forget it. My mind, now more at ease since I was far, far

away from England, began to recover itself, and I looked at Lucy as likely to be a useful helpmate when we landed in America. I thought, if I could stick close to Richardson, my ready money might assist him, whilst my connexion with his family might make me happier and more resigned to the new life on which I was about to enter. It's not the best time in the world to make love when a woman is sea-sick ; but they remember attentions more in sickness than in health. I soon got into conversation with her, wheedled from her the determination of her father, wrapped her up close in her shawl, removed her fears as to danger, and by degrees got into a kind of friendly familiarity : she allowed me to tie her bonnet on better ; and so, Ben, from one thing we got to another, until I had shaken hands with her, and recommended her to go down below, for the clouds had now risen a little, and some drops of rain began to fall.

“ ‘ Come, lads,’ said the captain, who was a stout little fellow and understood the use of everything in his ship but a quadrant and

Hamilton Moore, and who set the example of throwing a piece of wood overboard, and walking along the deck quickly, endeavouring to keep abreast of it, so as to judge how fast the ship was going, and in order to save his fingers from the wet log line, for it was preciously cold,—‘Come, my lads, away aloft to hand the fore-topsail.’ We were then under a close reefed main and fore-topsail and fore-sail, going about nine knots, and rolling about like a washing-tub in a ripple. In those times, Ben, ships making a run of it had not many men, and a squall gave them plenty to do. ‘Away aloft, my lads, one or two of you; the rest clap on the fore-topsail clew-lines and bunt-lines.’ The sail nearly clewed up itself, for when they started the sheets, the wind lifted it, and it required no great exertion to get it as snug as the clew-lines and bunt-lines could get it. The men now went aloft to furl the sails, but as the ship surged, it would every now and then blow over the yard; and I saw that if these fellows, who were not over handy, did not mind what they were about,

we should have one or two of them on deck without the use of the rigging, or perhaps a man overboard, in which case his chance of being saved was very little indeed. I was standing abaft; the captain was steering; the hands went aloft: one young fellow, the most active of the crew, scudded up to the topmast head and came down on the yard-arm by the lift, and there he stuck laughing at the others. The captain roared for all hands of them to gather up the bunt first; but whether it was that the rest seemed anxious to lay out on the yard, or that they did not understand the captain, or how to set about furling the sail in a gale, I don't know; but one of the crew, who had got on the quarter of the yard, before he could secure his hold, was caught by the sail as it bellied up over him, and he was overboard in a moment. Lucy, who with me had her eyes fixed on the seaman, gave a shriek. I off coat, clapped the helm hard a-starboard, and broached the ship to, luckily without an accident: there was a large grating close at hand, I bundled it overboard, and only heard

Lucy call out, ‘Gracious God!’ before I was in as high a sea as need have swamped a boat.

“It was still light : I got hold of the grating, and shoved it before me right in the mark left by the wake of the ship, as long as it lasted; and then took my chance, until I saw the hat of the lad. I strove with all my might to reach it—I struck out with all my strength—I had no thought for myself—I never looked once at the ship to see if assistance was coming from her—I only exerted myself to save the man from a watery grave! I was now close to it—I urged the grating on—stretched my hand out, holding on by the other, for I knew what drowning men would do; and, Ben, as I’m living here this minute, the hat alone remained in my hand—there was not a hair of a man’s head in it! I looked round me—I saw the boat coming towards me, but the object of my search was nowhere visible; I therefore clung to the grating; and long—ay, long, did it appear before the boat reached me—so faint and fatigued did I feel. When I was lifted in, I was so dead done, that I lay

in the stern sheets panting like a dog in a hot day.

“ The first words that I heard uttered were, ‘ Mind how you come along in the boat.’ I recovered instantly and looked up. There was that lumbering vessel, appearing as if every time she rolled to leeward she would roll into us, and when she surged to windward, she looked as if she had left us far from her, when down she came, the sea rushed from under her, and we were again distant. It was no time to act a part; the thing was to save one’s own life. I caught hold of a rope and with the activity of a seaman and a man used to these occurrences, I waited the time when the ship rolled to leeward, and I was on deck the first. I saw Lucy abaft, and I saw the welcome she expressed; but these were no moments for women and love. I jumped into the main chains, and assisted to get the crew on board; and as we were preparing to veer her astern—for she was the stern boat—a sea came heavier than the rest, the boat was swamped, and the men with difficulty saved.

The wreck of her cut adrift, we once more bore up and steered our course.

“ ‘ Much obliged to you, sir,’ said the captain ; ‘ but the next time I ’ll trouble you not to jump overboard after the men. I ’ve lost my boat and my grating, and all because you followed the hat, which was blown away to leeward from the head. We roared out and pointed to you, but you would go your own way : it was a gallant thing, however, for any man to do ; and between you and me,’ said he in a whisper, ‘ you are no more a Somersetshire man, than I ’m the figure-head of my own ship ! A ploughboy does not know how to round a ship to, and a youngster like you does not want a wig to cover his skull.’

“ This was awkward, and I escaped below ; but I soon came on deck again, and every man fore and aft came and thanked me, and shook me by the hand. Then it was I thought how curiously we were made up, Ben : that one moment we should be taking a man’s life for the sake of a few pieces of paper, and the next we should be risking our own to save a fellow-

creature, with no hope of reward beyond what we get from a woman's eye or our own hearts. But that is just it: a sailor never thinks of fear upon the sea; it's his cradle, his home; his house floats upon it, his provisions are within hail, his grog under his feet; he does not know what it is to feel hungry, and be shoved away like a dirty swab forward, when he asks a man as big as a beer-barrel round the provision-room, for enough bread to keep life and soul together. He is a stranger to what a man feels who is houseless, penniless ashore, and who knows that, by returning to his family whom he has disgraced, when his pride was humbled his purse might be filled.

“A glass of hot grog set me all a-taunto again. The crew crept silently below, and when they spoke to one another, it began with a shake of the head and a queer look of the eye; and ‘Poor Tom! poor fellow!’ was all that was said of him who so lately had lived and moved amongst them.

“We had run a thousand miles, and were not far to the southward of the Western Is-

lands; when the wind gradually lulled, and, as if to take breath for another breeze, got into a calm. Those who before had been unable to show on deck, now came up as merry as grigs; and we managed, when we were as quiet as a duck in a pond, to get a fiddler to work, and to do a bit of steps on the deck. Poor Tom was forgotten; his traps had been shared out amongst the crew, or sold at so low a price as scarcely to be worth keeping an account of. We were all alive and merry, when a circumstance occurred which by no means contributed to keep me free from alarm. The day following the calm, it was calm again, the weather mild, the sun even warm, and the captain determined that all hands should dine on deck.

“We were, counting women, passengers, children, and crew, about seventy in all: every one easily known but myself. There was no doubt in the captain’s mind but that I was under false colours; but he could not make out any more of me than beyond a doubt I was a sailor, and a good one; yet still, in my long-shore toggery, and having shipped my gentle-

manly manner, I was not easily to be fathomed. ‘To-day,’ said he, ‘as we may whistle all the breath out of our bodies for a breeze, we’ll have a general scrub below, open all the hatchways, and make ourselves as jolly as we can upon deck.’ The women all liked it; the men thought it a good move, and all were pleased but the crew, who had most of the work to do: it’s true, a few of the women lent a hand; but the scrubbing-brush and the sand were flourished about by the men belonging to the ship. We dined at one o’clock, and we were sitting on deck: the captain had a number of newspapers on board, some of which had got wet during the gale from the neglect of the boy, and these were brought up and spread out to dry.

“I forgot, Ben, to tell you, that after we had been some days at sea, and when I felt my neck pretty free from a sudden stretch, I paid the captain twenty pounds, the sum for which he engaged to take me across. I had given him ten guineas before we started, and the rest was to be paid on our arrival. As I knew he was a man who never read a newspaper, and cared no

more about what was going on in the world than a dog cares for its grandfather, I thought I was all safe in getting rid of some of the notes, and therefore, coming Captain Grand over him, I said, 'Here, my good fellow, as you may on your arrival be very busy with the other passengers and your cargo,'—he had very little of that on board,—'and as I shall myself be much pressed for time,—for it's not unlikely but that I shall return to England with you, if I can arrange the business on hand, I would rather pay you at once, and be free to land and be off without interruption.' The bait took; the captain, thinking he would nab me for a return at a higher price, fingered the rhino, and looking at the two five-pound flimseys, and holding them up to the light to see the watermark I suppose, put them away in his desk, and gave me a ticket, which was to stand as an acknowledgment of the payment; saying, as he winked at me, 'Two bad paymasters, master; one who pays before, and the other who does not pay at all:' and he looked at me with a peculiar look of aversion, as if I had robbed

him, and now paid him back in his own coin. Indeed, I had observed that from the moment his crew spoke highly of me for venturing my life to save their shipmate, he had taken every opportunity to snarl and sneer at me.

“ ‘ May I look at one of those newspapers, captain?’ said old Richardson.

“ ‘ Certainly !’ replied the captain, and he placed two or three of the latest date in his hand.

“ ‘ Lucy,’ said the father, ‘ sit down here and read me out something.’

“ Well, Ben, I’m blessed if the girl did not get ahead with ‘ More particulars about the late desperate robbery and attempt at murder ;’ and there was a full account, which she read out, every now and then stopping and saying, ‘ How horrid !—Mercy on me !—Lord save us !’ and such like pretty hints ; but at last she came to the pith of the yarn—the rogues’ yarn, Ben, giving an account, that the two men taken had made a full confession of their guilt, and had implicated a third person, who, Lord —— said, was the man who robbed him.—A

reward had been offered for my discovery, and they had traced me even to the barber's shop. Thinks I, never mind, they'll lose the scent on the water: here are no accidental people who have known you and who watch you; the mark of the keel, the wake of the ship, lasts about as long as a man's gratitude; and there is no footsteps to follow, no scent to lie, no track to direct. I smiled as I thought of this; for, having now taught myself to believe in my security, I soon taught myself to despise the danger.

“ ‘ Oh! here's more about it. Mr. Williams,’ said Lucy, ‘ you look so interested in the story, that one might fancy you the young lord himself.’

“ ‘ Ay,’ said the captain, clapping in his oar, ‘ or one of the company, at any rate.’

“ ‘ What horrible ruffians these fellows must be!’ said Lucy. ‘ I can fancy them with their horrid black masks over their faces, their hands red with blood, their knife reeking with the life of their victim, their flashing eyes, and yet their fearful tremble!’

“ ‘ Nonsense, my dear !’ said her father :
‘ read the description of these vagabonds, and
don’t give way to these fancies.’ ”

“ ‘ Why, sir,’ said the captain, as he looked
at me, ‘ do you think we have brought any of
the vagabonds with us ?’ ”

“ We all smiled ; but mine, Ben, was not a
smile of merriment. I managed to alter my
mouth into a smile, but it was one of bitter
hatred against the captain. ”

“ ‘ Oh !’ said Lucy, ‘ here ’s the description.
“ The said Thomas Brown, alias William
Smith, alias Robert Davis, is about twenty-
two years of age, light hair and eyes, aquiline
nose, and has a scar on his left cheek. On his
right arm he has Britannia leaning on an an-
chor, done with gunpowder. He stands about
five feet ten, is slim made, with rather a gen-
tlemanly manner ; and when last seen, wore a
rough pea-jacket and large Flushing trousers,
with a belcher handkerchief and very curious
hat. ”

“ ‘ Well, that is odd !’ said the captain.
‘ Mr. Williams has light eyes, and a dark wig,

is just the age, has just the nose, and, as I 'm a living man, has a mark upon his cheek !'

" This only produced a laugh, more especially as I said, ' But I don't think I have the anchor on my arm.'

" As he turned away he said out loud, ' I 'm not so certain of that ; for when he came on board after that swim—' and here he got over the other side of the deck and I heard no more. The man who would risk his life for another, covers himself from any unworthy suspicion : you know, Ben, what seamen think of such a person ; how they point him out ; how they cling to him ; and how, if he is an officer, he can lead them with a thread : if he undertakes any service, there 's no lack of volunteers ; if he orders, all rush to obey. At that moment they would as soon have believed me the devil himself as either Thomas Brown, William Smith, or Robert Davis : but I was the man ; and, villain that I was, I had not yet learned the power of disguising my feelings so well as to escape the quick eye of the captain. Ben, I hated him,—I feared him,

and that made me hate him the more ; and even had he not expressed himself so plainly, and brought the colour into my face as he pointed to the mark, I should have hated him, because I was jealous of him. He was no common captain of a trader, for his eye was like a hawk's, and that eye fell upon Lucy. She never was on deck that I was not with her, or he would have poisoned her heart against me ; but I repaid him in his own coin, for I spoke to Lucy of his ungenerous, unmanly behaviour to me, after I had jumped overboard, and soon convinced a willing ear, (for women always like the brave and love the fearless,) that he who could hazard his life so coolly, could not bear about him a bad heart or an evil conscience. She listened to me ; she told me of the pleasures of her home, and she soon began to consult me. I saw, young as I was, that I had made my way good in that quarter, and I turned my attention to the father. He took kindly to me—for he was getting ahead in life, and he thought, I dare say, that a strong prop might support an old house ; and I had three great

requisites—youth, strength, and some money. The captain had told them what I had said when I paid my passage-money, and that, like all men who are playing desperate and double-faced games, it was evident, one way or the other, I had not steered clear of the banks of falsehood. But women in love never see, and old men weighed down by misfortune cannot see: they talk of experience, as if experience was a dog, that you might whistle to whenever you wanted it.

“But I must get ahead, Ben, or the watch will be out before you hear the end: the worst is to come; and you are the only man who ever shall hear it from my lips. The wind, after baffling about for some time, enabled us to lay our course, and we once more heard the water rippling by us. She was but a sorry sailer in a wind; and, perhaps I thought worse of her than she really was, from my anxiety to be clear of her. It is true, I carried my description along with me; and when my hair got all right again, unless it came the colour of my wig, any one could have known me at a glance;

but when I was safe in America, I should have been no worse than some of my neighbours: and as it is more pleasant to be hanged in company, so it is more pleasant to live with people as bad as yourself, and who cannot upbraid you with that which they may have practised themselves.

“ Day passed slowly away ; the night—the long night, which I often broke in upon by walking the deck, and sometimes steering the ship, passed also; and at the end of the twenty-fourth day we began to see a bird or two, which had been blown from the land. We passed a good deal of floating weed, and a child might have known we were growing towards the end of our passage. We had seen several strange sail; but all avoided us as carefully as we avoided them. We had not even an alarm, and I more than once thought that we were destined to arrive in safety. The night of the twenty-fifth was beautiful about eight in the evening, and at ten, when we had taken our glass of grog, (for we all managed that affair,) and had drunk ‘ a good sight of the

land the next day,' although the captain swore it was two hundred miles off, we little thought how that night would end.

"We were on a wind on the starboard tack, with the top-gallant sails set, going four knots, with a smooth sea. It was a dark night, for there was no moon, and the clouds aloft were driving rather smartly in the same direction as the wind. I had a queer kind of overallishness that night; but it was nothing like what I felt an hour before I spoke to you, Ben. Lucy and I had kept an eye upon each other, and when I wished her good-night, and saw her go down the companion, I little thought how soon I was to see her again, and under what frightful circumstances. I was lolling over the taff-rail, when the captain came up to me, and he spoke out like a man.

"I say, Mr. Williams, Mr. Smith, Mr. Brown, or what the devil else you choose to call yourself—I say, I don't like the way you get talking to that girl on board my ship; such as you don't want a modest woman for a companion!"

“That was coming strong,” said I.

“Just so,” continued Bob, “and I was fairly taken aback as any ship could be in a squall.

“ ‘It’s no use your pumping up your lungs,’ said the captain, ‘for any humbug: seeing is believing all over the world; and I have seen the mark on your arm, and you are the man for whom the reward has been offered. Besides,’ said he, ‘I’m much obliged to you for taking me for such a fool as you think I am; for the very notes you have given me are the notes stolen from that young lord. Every man does his duty in this life,’ said this canting scoundrel, ‘and I shall do mine to my God and my country. Out of my ship you don’t go; and if there’s any truth in the papers, I’ll have the reward, and you shall dance upon nothing!’

“ ‘This is a good reward,’ said I, ‘for risking my life for one of your crew!’

“ ‘Ay,’ said he with a sneer, ‘and for losing my boat and my grating. But you are my man, and I’ll see you hanged before this day six months!’

“ ‘ Not you,’ said I carelessly. ‘ But enough of this joking. I think you have taken a glass too much, and perhaps speak what you would not wish ; so, as I don’t want to quarrel, or set a bad example to any man, I ’m off to my crib, and I recommend you to keep your eyes open, and look out for the land.’ ”

“ ‘ I ’ll look after *you*, my hearty,’ said he ; and I tumbled down to my sleeping berth, none the better pleased for the conversation.— He never had an opportunity of making money by hanging me, but I had an opportunity of shaking him off. About six bells in the first watch, a sudden squall took the ship, and it saved the crew the trouble of furling top-gallant sails, for they were split in a second, and blew about like ribbons in a woman’s cap. There was not a man fore and aft who would go aloft, and we had plenty to do to get the courses off her, clew down the topsail yards, and make her a little snug. After the first burst, we had time to get a little to rights : we managed to hand the fore and the mizen top-sails, and we clapped the ‘ Hope’ right before

the wind. As we were in no small danger, I had, off coat again, gone aloft, lent a hand to furl the sails, and was now easily known as an old seaman. The wind increased—the rain began to pour—it became a thick, misty, murky night—you could not see the bowsprit-end; whilst the ship seemed to sail faster than usual, and made as much noise as she surged along as a three-decker. It was two bells in the middle watch before everything was made secure; the course was about west-north-west, for we had got into the latitude of Sandy Hook, and, not knowing much about longitude, we were running that down. The women, who at first had been frightened, were now all fast asleep again; and, as I was going below, the captain said, ‘I thought so; a deserter in all probability, a smuggler, and certainly a thief!—fifty pounds easily got! and I’ll take him back at a cheaper rate! What business has he now out of irons?’

“‘That’s gratitude!’ said I. ‘Good night, captain; if you want a light hand aloft again, don’t reckon upon me. I’ve saved your own-

ers more than fifty pounds to-night, and you some hours' rest. I know what respect is due to the captain of a ship, or I should answer your other murmur in another style.'

" 'A mutiny !' said he, collaring me, and leading me to the mainmast. ' Here, Thompson, and you, Macintyre, seize this fellow's hands behind him, and lash him to the bits for a little. And here, boy,' said he, calling for his youngster, ' jump down in the cabin, and in the starboard locker abaft all, you'll find a pair of handcuffs. And now you are my prisoner, and shall remain so snug enough.'

" I need not tell you that I was a favourite with the crew, and that even they hesitated ; but the captain was a thick-set, sturdy fellow, and, stout as I was, I felt like a flea in his grip. One of the men, Thompson I believe, talked about such usage to a gentleman passenger ; and then, and not till then, was it that the whole tide set against me. ' Gentleman indeed !' said the captain. ' Do gentlemen mark their arms this way ?' and he tore my shirt and showed the cursed proof of what I was. ' Why

this,' he continued, 'is the man for whom the reward was offered—he is the man who committed the murder !'

“ ‘ I never did it !’ said I, ‘ never ! I wanted to stop them after the robbery !’

“ ‘ My eyes !’ said Macintyre ; and in a moment I felt his hands holding me the faster.

“ ‘ Bear a hand, boy !’ said the captain.

“ ‘ I can’t find them, sir,’ said he.

“ ‘ Hold him fast, Thompson, whilst I jump below for them.’

“ ‘ Ay, ay, sir,’ said he.

“ ‘ Is it thus you repay me for what I have done ?’ said I.

“ ‘ That ’s no business of ours ; and you did not save him, after all.’

“ ‘ Then my curse light upon you, you ungrateful villains, and may hell take you for your ingratitude !’ At that moment the captain came up with the handcuffs. I had but one chance—a struggle. ‘ To the devil with you all !’ said I, and made a sudden jerk and got clear. It was three to one. I had no chance ; my security was in an accident, Ben. That acci-

dent happened whilst the captain was urging on Thompson and the other, and whilst I, as far as in me lay, defended myself. The ship was lifted upon a high sea and surged heavily forward. ‘Round her to!’ said a man forward, ‘we are in the rollers!’—And scarcely had his voice reached us, when again a long rolling sea, which came roaring behind us, broke just astern, and the surf flew over the stern. This shook the determination of the captain. He rounded the ship to, and as she came flying to the wind, the sails were taken aback, a heavy sea struck her on the chest-tree, and the foremast, giving a tremendous crash, fell over the starboard side.

“ ‘Who is the prisoner now?’ said I.

“No sooner had the ship become aback, than she lost her way through the water, became perfectly unmanageable, and as the succeeding roller came along, the main-topmast fell, the bowsprit snapped.—Ay, Ben, you may have seen some sights, and I have heard of that business in South America, where the birds walked about amongst the

living, having just returned from eating their companions; but you have never seen thirty or forty affrighted women rush almost naked from their beds, gaining the slippery deck, to see ruin aloft, and inevitable shipwreck to leeward. You have never heard the scream of women in such moments: they gave one loud shriek, which, whilst it afforded some consolation,—for women always seem pleased when they make themselves heard,—frightened the crew. All chance of escape from anything like order was gone in a moment: the captain knew not what he was about; and I, who had seen some few dangerous surfs, and who had been accustomed, from the life I had led, not to be frightened before I was hurt—even I lost all presence of mind, and ran in amongst the women, who had got abaft the mizen-mast, all huddled together, and looking like a flock of sheep when a strange dog comes barking near them.

“I saw old Richardson in the arms of his daughter; the poor old fellow had been very ill, and had latterly fretted himself very much

about his health, thinking he had not enough left to start afresh in America. He was now on his knees, frightened like a child, and, holding his hands up, was praying for himself. He seemed not to heed his daughter, for all I heard him say was 'Save me!—save me!' It was but a poor time for consolation, but I did all I could: I told Lucy that I would die by her side, and that my best exertions should be made for her and her father.

"Lucy and I had understood each other before this business occurred. I had made her sensible how much I loved her; and now, with the danger of shipwreck before us, we grew closer to each other. I held her round the waist with the right hand, and with the left I held on to a ring-bolt in the larboard bulwark, and kept as close under it as possible. The old father I had placed just before me, and he was clinging to a rope's-end with both hands with a fearful grasp; his words were all astray-like, and the ravings of the father seemed to break the heart of the daughter.

" 'I shall live to save you, Lucy,' said I.

‘I feel it. Here’s another sea coming—hold fast—cling to me.’ It came. Those who have heard how the sea topples along in its heavy rollers just as it begins to break—those who have seen a stranded vessel smashed as if it were a light boat—those who have known the force of the sea, can alone judge of the tremendous power with which this rolling sea emptied itself upon us. I clung to the side, and drew Lucy closer. It came—I heard its noise—it broke about a hundred yards from the ship—it dashed its entire strength against the ‘Hope’—it carried away the upper works fore and aft, shook the whole ship like a leaf, which would have sunk from the immense quantity we shipped, had not the ‘Hope,’ as the wave passed almost over us, struck upon the sand and nearly split fore and aft.

“Then it was that a fearful cry arose—not of those on the deck—for only two remained, Lucy and myself—but from the lips of forty or fifty women by that one sea swept clear from the decks and left to struggle in the foaming sea. The cry was short, but dread-

ful: Lucy joined her voice to it, and in the fright never missed her father; he had been carried away with the rest; and of that group of women who two minutes before were on their knees, some holding up their children,—some clinging to sisters or to mothers—all, all praying,—not one soul remained,—the following sea swallowed them up, and not a word was uttered.

“Never shall I forget that moment—ay, Ben, every bad deed of my life then came before me. I swear that between the seas—and they don’t take many seconds in following each other—the whole of that unfortunate robbery rushed before me. Lucy had not spoken a word; she merely said, ‘My poor father!—my poor father!’ and she clung to me faster and faster. Again the sea came bellowing along, and then I heard the voice of the captain, who had got under the lee of the mainmast, calling out, ‘Hold on—hold on!’ The sea lifted the vessel afloat and left her again a wreck, and her starboard gunwale under water. I had answered the captain’s ‘Hold on;’ and he,

directly the danger was past, left his place and came aft to us.

“ ‘What!’ said he—for he was a man who could look death in the face, and who had now recovered from his first fright—‘What! has the Devil forgot his own in such a night as this?’

“ ‘No,’ said I, ‘he’ll have you before long.’

“ ‘Another sea was coming; ‘Let me hold on by that ring-bolt,’ said the captain.

“ ‘Not you,’ said I.

“ ‘Then I will by your throat,’ said he; ‘you shan’t be saved whilst honest men drown.’

“I let go my hold of the ring-bolt to save myself from being in his grasp. The sea broke right into us, and I recovered my breath to find myself on the water: near me was Lucy, and not far from her the captain. I cannot think of this last scene without trembling; I caught Lucy by the hair, and at the same time caught hold of a studding-sail boom, I believe, which, amidst the general wreck, had been washed overboard. That last sea devoured the ‘Hope;’ she broke up like a dried

piece of wood, and the whole sea was covered with the pieces. I pulled Lucy to the spar, and bade her cling to it; it hardly would support her weight, and I was obliged to merely hold it for fear it should be swept away from me. You know how little a swimmer requires to keep him above water, but here the surf raged over and over me fearfully, and I felt that I required a little more assistance.

“ At this moment the captain, who could swim, made towards us. The spar, I told you, was not more than sufficient for Lucy; I saw her certain death if the captain caught hold of it; and therefore I resolved to drown him! As he approached, I lifted myself a little by the aid of the spar: the captain was nearly done; he grasped at the boom, and as he missed it I placed my foot on his head and shoved him under water: he rose again, and again I succeeded. I saw his imploring look to me to save him—*I* of all men alive to save him!—and with my own life in danger! Ay, little he knew how men of my character

wish to die, yet fear the death — how they would bless madness, and yet fear the ravings which might betray them. I did drown him — and now the secret is out.

“ I awoke from a kind of stupor to find myself in a fisherman’s hut ; how saved, God only knows :—but I of all that crew—*I*, the only one who would have wished to die, was held back by a hair and saved. Days before I was well enough to go out, body after body had been washed on shore and buried. No description of mine could identify Lucy ; and she was buried, if cast ashore, with the rest on the beach, near the spot where her body was landed.

“ That murder, perhaps, was a just murder ; but I have never slept from that moment, and no human being but yourself has ever heard of the loss of the ‘ Hope ’ before. I entered on board an American merchant ship, having procured a certificate that I was a native of that country. I made two voyages ; the third we were boarded by an English man-of-war. We were mustered, my protection torn before my face, and after one or two changes, I was draft-

ed on board the Victory. Now, Ben, I have a favour to ask of you. My daughter——”

“Forecastle there!” said the officer of the watch.

“Sir,” answered the lieutenant, who was on the weather side.

“Keep a good look-out for any rockets or blue-lights.”——“Ay, ay, sir.”

“The admiral’s on deck,” said Matson.

“It’s a pity,” said I, “he has not two eyes; he would sleep with one always open.”

“How he jumped about when they reported the signal to him to-day!” remarked one of the lads who had been at work with his cutlass on the other side; “I thought the stump of his right arm would have been shaken out of its hold. He is the one! By the piper! if we get into action, we shan’t come out of it again in a hurry. But I don’t feel as if I was going to be shot this time.”

This gave me an awkward feeling, so I walked off; and when I got snug into my hammock, I began to think of the curious be-

haviour of Matson, and to wonder if I had been warned, or what he could have meant by saying, "he had been *told* he was to die;" and I was thinking and thinking, until I thought that I was going to die,—and then what was to become of Tackle's daughter? "Ay," said I to myself, as I rubbed my eyes, in order to make sure that I was awake, "to-morrow she may be without a protector or a friend: for, now I come to think of it, the admiral perhaps has had a warning; for, just before he hoisted his flag, he went to see his coffin,—that one Hallowell gave him,—and said he, 'I shall want that when I come back!' That looks awkward, thought I; and so I got wool-gathering and thinking all about death and such like, for the ship appeared to me to be more still than usual—the decks were more quiet, and perhaps the feeling which is generally found amongst a crew going into action was felt by the bravest on board the Victory. Ay, we must all have our misgivings and our curious feelings before the first broadside; and I don't care how much a scamp a man may be, or how often he has

walked up to the muzzle of an eighteen-pounder, but he must feel, that in a moment he may be cut to pieces, his wife left a beggar, his children without a soul to relieve them; and this is not the most pleasant thought, although they might not have been the very best of husbands. Well, I'm not ashamed to say, that I felt a creeping kind of fear—ay, fear ! I felt a fear that I might be killed ; not on account of myself—no, no ; my log-book was marked up, and I hope I could overhaul it without shrinking. To be sure, I had been wild enough when I was a young one : but I never injured man or woman that I'm aware of. If ever I saw a poor fellow with his grog stopped, I gave him a sip of mine ; I never reported any man so as to get him punished ; and although I had been in the service some few years, yet I never had a stripe in my life. So I was easy as to my own score. But I thought of my wife, and what would become of her if I died and Nelson died. If he lived, I knew he never would desert her ; but in such an action as this was sure to be, who could

count upon coming out of it clear of the surgeon or the sail-maker ? Well, I got dozing and dozing, and seeing the little girl before me, with my wife ; and then I saw the sail-maker taking my measure with my hammock ; and I awoke from a troubled dream, fancying he had run the needle through my nose.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

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